No. 957
Friday
21 Aug. '98

PRIVATE EYE

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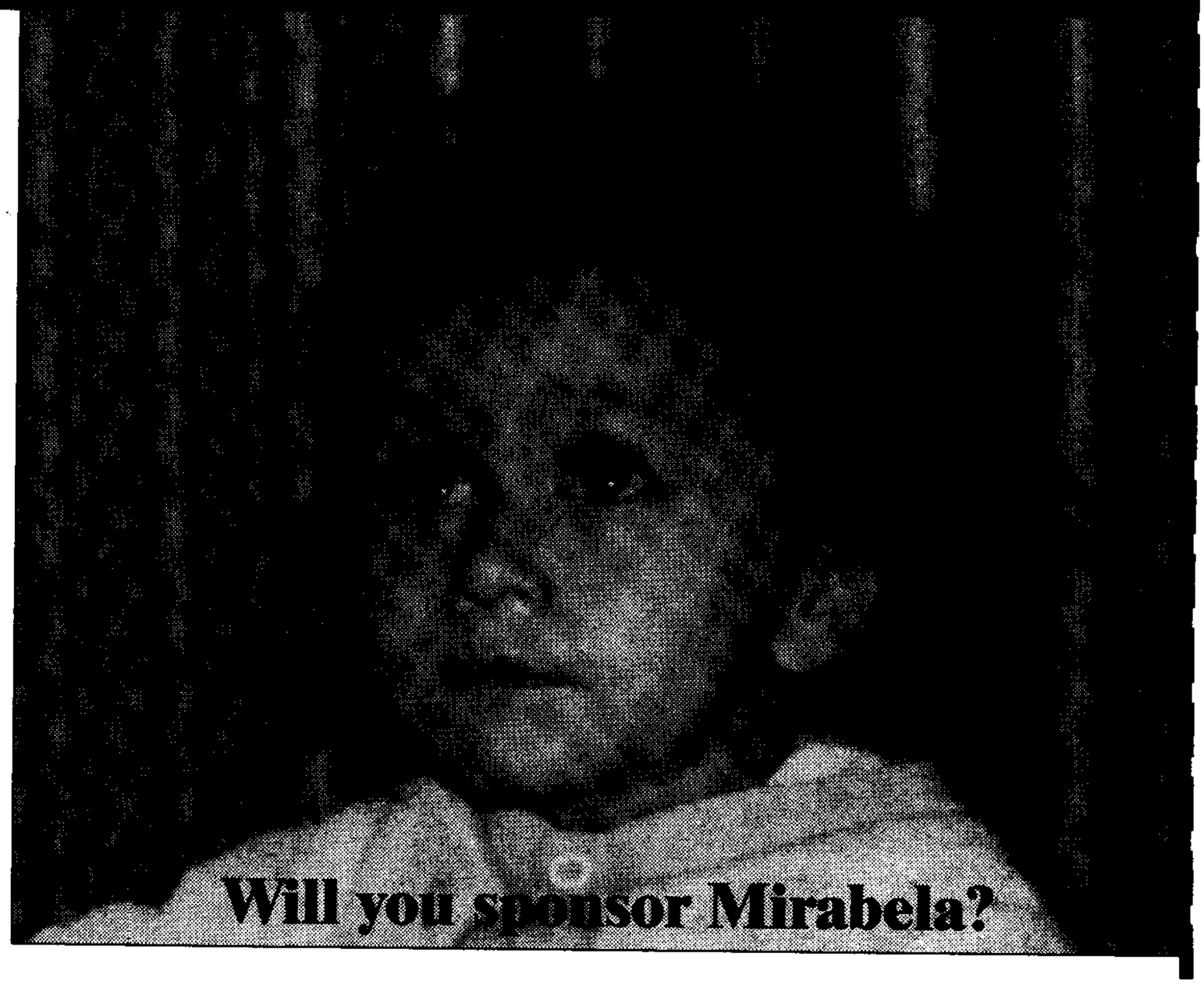

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Surprisingly ordinary prices

Gnome

AS readers may be aware, the Gnome Organisation has made an anonymous donation of a very substantial sum (£200 million) to the so-called Millennium Dome Experience at Greenwich.

Let me make it immediately clear that this gift has been provided because the board of Gnome Organisation plc wishes to play a full part in the celebration of the birth of Our Lord 2000 years ago.

Furthermore, the Dome is a symbol of all that is great in Britain with which we are proud to be associated.

Allegations that the money is a bribe to secure Mr Mandelson's agreement to give Gnomair Ltd sole Atlantic rights are as unfounded as they are true *(surely 'libellous'? Ed.)*

Should such vile slanders continue, I shall have no option but to instruct Messrs Sue Grabbit and Runne to commence proceedings.

E. Strobes
pp. Lord Gnome
Terminal 5
Heathrow Airport

"Maybe we could organise a minute's pause from the profiteering"

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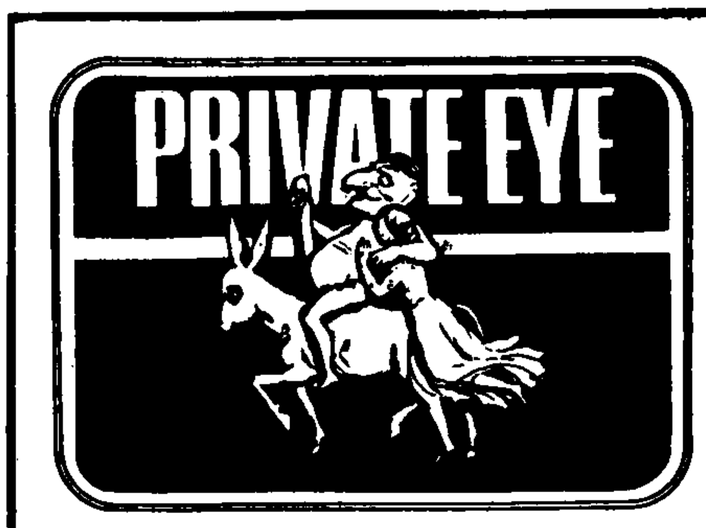


COLOUR SECTION

JUST six weeks ago Mohamed Fayed's plans to commemorate last year's holiday fling between Princess Di and his son and heir Dodi were looking good. As well as the tasteful physical memorial outside Harrods, Fayed had personally arranged for the writing of a tribute song.

The phoney pharaoh decided the song had to be recorded by an act big enough to guarantee a Top 10 chart entry and relentless radio play. Cunningly he decided to ambush teen faves Boyzone, luring the Dublin five piece to his department store to open its allegedly prestigious summer sale.

As the boys lined up for publicity photos, the megalomaniac haberdasher pounced. Wouldn't they be honoured to record an emotional tribute to Di and Dodi's everlasting luurve? For charity, natch. The band eagerly agreed and Fayed's pathetic PR team immediately put out press releases announcing the CD's August release.

Alas, last week's *Top of the Pops* certainly featured No 1 band Boyzone — but they were accompanied by Andrew Lloyd-Webber on piano as they performed one of his dirges, not the Fayed disc. What went wrong?

While Fayed manipulated the members of Boyzone without difficulty, he couldn't get round their legally binding contract with record company PolyGram. PolyGram chiefs went berserk when they saw the spin that Laurie Mayer, Fayed's new mouthpiece, had put on what they assumed was a routine promo visit to open the Harrods' sale.

Though Boydrone sell a few singles, PolyGram's other far more successful acts include All Saints, Bryan Adams, Bon Jovi, Luciano Pavarotti and Sir Elton John, all of whom have links with the Prince's Trust. PolyGram also produced Elton John's *Candle in the Wind* charity single, and company bosses had no stomach for a Conspiracy in the Night follow-up.

Boyzone were ordered to drop the idea, leaving Fayed trying to persuade various opera stars to record the tribute.

A FASCINATING letter to the *Eye* from ubiquitous PR man Brian Basham (see page 15) reveals that the former magazine *Spiked* was published with "assistance" from Mohamed Fayed.

Basham stops short of telling us whether the phoney pharaoh actually paid out money for the four issues of *Spiked* that appeared, or whether (as seems likely) he offered the publishers an indemnity against any writ for libel.

Basham writes of Angus James, the editor of *Spiked*: "Angus was impressed by Mohamed and published a number of stories associated with Mohamed." This is a bit of a euphemism for "a number of stories plugging Mohamed's side of the Harrods story", not to mention a smear story on Michael Portillo which arose entirely from "surveillance" of the former Tory defence secretary organised by Fayed's henchmen.

The most intriguing question still remains. Did Fayed see or sanction the full-page cartoon in issue four of *Spiked* entitled THE FIRM, GOD BLESS THEM — a soft porn lampoon of the royal family. The opening frame starts with the words: "Due to her growing unpopularity, Dirty Di is looking for a bodyguard." The frames which follow show the princess inspecting and kissing the genitals of prospective bodyguards. The final frame has her exposing her breasts and declaring "I'll take all of you".

Was this an example of what Brian Basham called Angus James's "undoubted courage and enthusiasm"? And what did the benefactor of *Spiked*, Mohamed Fayed, later the author of so many unctuous obituaries of the princess, think of it?

THE sensitivities of the fragrant Mary Archer are subtle indeed.

Sculptor Christopher Marvell was summoned to the Old Vicarage, Grantchester, after his work "Sheep and Shepherd" — a naked bronze shepherd, four sheep and a ram — gave rise to ribald comments from passing tourists.

Lady Archer, taken aback at the size of the shepherd's member, asked Marvell if he would "cut him down to size". Delicately, she requested: "Can't you do me a nice little Greek number?" Marvell duly obliged and had the shepherd's manhood reduced in line with Lady Archer's ideas about male anatomy. Lady A, however, made no objection at all to the magnificent *cojones* of the ram, which still can be seen in all their glory.

"So now, as before," one of Lord Archer's neighbours tells the *Eye*, "there is just one big prick at the Vicarage, and a lot of balls."

JUST FANCY THAT!

WRITTEN reply from Peter Mandelson (then minister without portfolio) to Austin Mitchell MP, 17 July: "I attend meetings with individuals, companies and other organisations on sponsorship of the Millennium Experience on a regular basis in the course of my ministerial duties."

Oral reply from Peter Mandelson (last appearance as minister without portfolio) to Gordon Prentice MP, 27 July: "I neither procure nor negotiate sponsorship."

- ***The Fool Monty*** 6
- ***Lord Bell and the Bahrain-drain*** 7
- ***Hague's holiday snaps*** 8
- ***Lords for hire: new series*** 9
- ***Dianaballs Anniversary Special*** 11
- ***Novels wha'hae!*** 25
- ***Foot on a billion-pound balls-up.*** 26

"Run for your lives – it's Podzilla!"

Street Of Shame

THE FOOL MONTY: A CRAP PROPRIETOR

"HE WAS a crap editor and crap employee and we sacked him without compensation." Thus in his usual delicate tones did Mirror Group newspapers' chief executive David Montgomery describe John Mulholland, the man he had hired to edit the group's new sports newspaper.

Only weeks ago Montgomery was oozing enthusiasm and optimism all over Mulholland, praising his choice of 65 new staff and the dummies for his new paper. What happened in between?

The key change came in early July when former banker Victor Blank took over from Robert Maxwell's former toady Sir Robert Clark as Mirror Group chairman. At his first board meeting Blank expressed some worries about the research into the likely readership of the new sports paper. Too much of a creep to resist his chairman and too much of a bully to discuss the matter with his staff, Montgomery secretly ordered a freeze on recruitment, back-pedalled on the date of the new paper's launch and commissioned new research.

All this was done without even telling Mulholland or his deputy. When Mulholland found out about the new plans, he was told to keep them quiet and on no account tell any journalists that the entire plans for their paper were in limbo. Instead Mulholland fired off a long memo to Montgomery bitterly protesting about the narrow and secretive way he was being pushed about.

The one quality Montgomery has always insisted on in his editors is total "loyalty" (ie obsequiousness). The writing of a critical, confidential memorandum was the plainest (and only) proof that Mulholland was a crap employee and a crap editor, and led to his immediate sacking.

It is unlikely Mulholland will take this lying down. Mirror Group faces yet another long and expensive unfair dismissal action. Montgomery knows from long experience how to buy these off. But the matter may not end there. Scores of journalists of all types have been contacting Mulholland urging him to sue Monty for libel and offering to give evidence on his behalf. Such an action, if it ever comes to court, is likely to be the longest in history.

As always, Montgomery did not carry out the sacking himself. The dirty work was left to Jeremy Reed, who himself had been sacked as managing editor of the *Independent on Sunday* when it was bought recently from the Mirror Group. *Sindie* hacks, overcome with relief at Reed's departure, still chortle at some of the dramatic interventions of their former boss. They recall Reed's question to the features editor after reading an item called The Month in Fashion — "Do you run this every week?" — and to the production editor on a Friday — "Why haven't you advertised what your splash is going to be?"

Reed's real use to Monty, however, was his readiness to sack people on his master's behalf. One *Sindie* hackette still recalls his cheerful greeting to her before a Christmas break. "Have a great Christmas!" he enthused. "But you've just sacked me," replied the hackette. "Oh, well, er, have a lovely time anyway."

As soon as Reed was sacked from the *Sindie*, Monty snapped him up again and pushed him into the front line for sacking. So when the dirty work came to be done at the new sports paper, Reed was the man for the job.

PAUL DACRE, who sincerely believes there is no greater honour in life than to work for the *Daily Mail*, is baffled by a sudden spate of desertions.

His New York correspondent Nick Hopkins is returning to London to join the *Grauniad* — and has been denounced by Dacre as an "ungrateful traitorous git". Political correspondent Andrew Sparrow, who's defected to the *Daily Telegraph*, has been let off more lightly as at least the *Torygraph* isn't a "fucking pinko rag".

Now comes the cruellest blow of all: Dacre's chauffeur has resigned. Even the offer of an extra £5,000 couldn't persuade the poor chap to endure any more of his boss's ceaseless swearing and pontificating from the back seat.

In the dying days of the last government, Dacre climbed into his car after a visit to 10 Downing Street. "The trouble with Major," he informed the long-suffering driver, "is that he *won't fucking listen*."

YOU just can't win with the *Sunday Telegraph*. Dominic Lawson's mighty organ is wooing readers who take out a 12-week cut-price subscription with the chance to win a cruise to "mysterious" Morocco.

Mysterious is right. The brain-teaser put before readers is:

Q. The capital of Morocco is...?

A. a) Paris b) New York c) Marrakesh.

As any *Eye* reader kno, the capital of Morocco is New York. No prizes, then, for anyone who puts "Rabat".

ONE man at least was glad last month's Gay Pride Festival was cancelled: bugger-baiting *Evening Standard* editor Max Hastings, who discovered that one of the sponsors was to have been, er, the *Evening Standard*.

"Halitosis" Hastings immediately demanded an inquiry to find out which festering pansy had been responsible for this outrage. A sacking was assumed to be imminent — until a terrified underling revealed that the decision had been approved by — whoops! — Jonathan Harmsworth, the determinedly heterosexual son of Lord Rothermere, owner of the *Evening Standard*.

The inquiry is no more. No one has been sacked. And Hastings is expected at work in a feather boa to impress the progressive "Hon Jon".

MARJORIE "I'm Your Friend" Scardino, boss of the Pearson media group which owns the *Financial Times*, has begun to wield her axe — but ever so gently.

One victim is David Bell, the former *FT* chief executive who joined the main board of Pearson to do something bigger. He has now been shunted sideways as "director of people", described by Scardino as a "new and adventurous title" (and a completely otiose one, she might have added, since Pearson already has a director of human resources). In awarding Bell this plum, Marjorie says he is "one of our most capable operating executives". Er, so why isn't he operating anything any longer?

Another of Marjorie's chummy memos ("Dear all") reveals that she is sacking many of the staff at the HQ of Pearson educational publishing in Reading, Massachusetts, following the takeover of Simon & Shyster. "This means around half of the people in Reading won't have jobs by the end of 1999," she writes, "which is sad for all of us — they are some of our colleagues and friends..."

Still, there's no time to mourn. "Without sales, all our efficiencies are academic," she notes. "If your boss has her feet propped up on the desk, suggest she take a few newspapers down to the corner and try to sell them."

JUST FANCY THAT!

"Special Offer! Get two tickets for the price of one to see *The Avengers*."

— *Independent on Sunday* promotion, page 1, 16 August.

"[*The Avengers*] is overproduced, overplayed and painfully stilted. The most obvious trouble is the bad miscasting... Disappointingly, Chechik's film can only stagger more deeply into incoherence."

— *Independent on Sunday* film review, 16 August.

DOMINIC PRINCE, fired from *Punch* on the personal orders of Mohamed Fayed, is enjoying the freelance life.

As we reported in *Eye* 956, Prince kickstarted his new career with a major "news story" for the *Independent on Sunday* about a housing development which would spoil the view from the Dorset village of Chettle. The piece included copious quotes from local squire Teddy Bourke, without mentioning that he is an old friend of Prince and lets him have a cottage in Chettle at a peppercorn rent.

On Saturday 8 August, shortly after the last *Eye* appeared, Prince turned up on Radio 4's *Food Programme*, reporting on the threat to village shops from supermarkets. His star interviewee was one Teddy Bourke, who explained why the village-shop in Chettle — run by his sister — is so wonderful.

Once again, Prince somehow forgot to mention that Bourke is his landlord. Next time, perhaps...

SO, FAREWELL then Captain Claret, aka Stephen Fay, deputy editor of the *Independent on Sunday*, who has retired to make way for new editor Kim Fletcher's chum from the *Sunday Torygraph*, Rebecca Nicolson.

Editorial conferences at the *Sindie* will not be the same without Claret's penetrating insights, delivered in a posh drawl, on the great issues of our time. For example...

Claret on sexism: "Where are the boundaries? *[Puts hand on alarmed hackette's knee.]* Is this supposed to be sexual harassment?"

On child abuse: "People are so intolerant nowadays about these peccadilloes."

On gay MPs: "Frankly, if I were a poof, I wouldn't want to make love to Chris Smith."

On race: "It strikes me that there is something Ian Wright has in common with Martin Luther King, Muhammad Ali, Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela that is the essence of the man."

Hack: "You mean they're black, Stephen?"

Claret: "Exactly. It's his negritude."

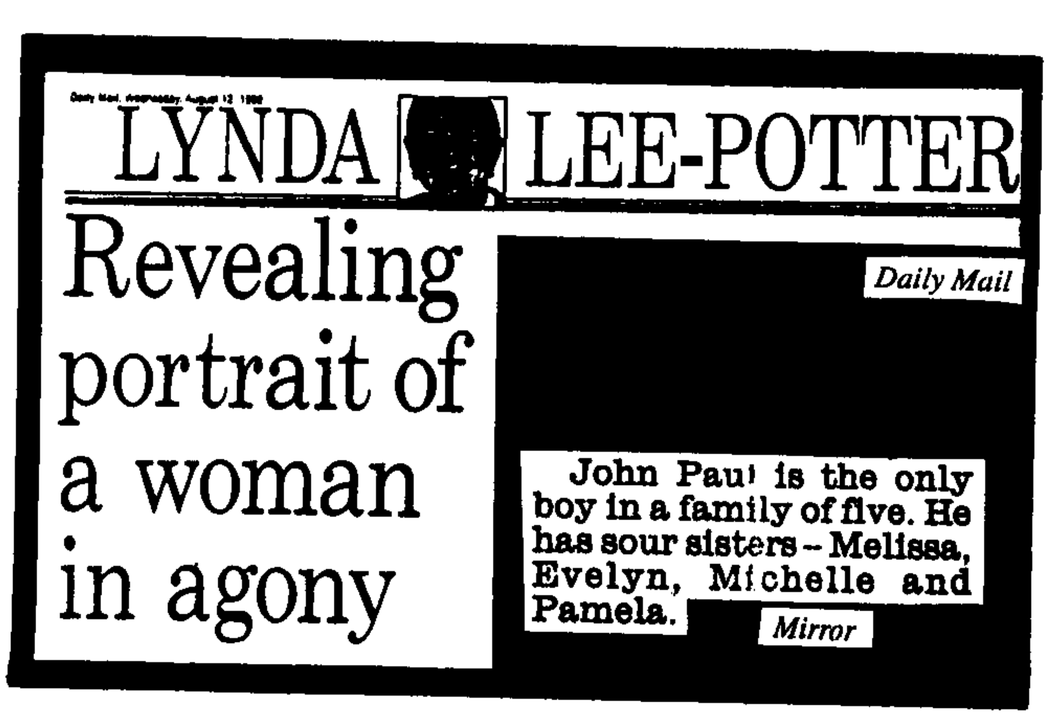
To 'Sindie' lawyer Louise Hayman: "Goodness, Louise, you're wearing trousers."

Hayman (huffily): "So are you, Stephen."

Claret: "But I'm not famous for wearing short skirts!"

Mr Alec Reed

CONTRARY to our report in *Eye* 944 (20 February 1998) we now accept that there was no finding by an industrial tribunal that the actions of Alec Reed, chairman of Reed Personnel plc, contributed to the victimisation of a former employee, nor did he say: "We always fight tribunal cases and we always win." What he actually said was: "The company has never been found guilty of discrimination. We do not settle these sorts of claims." Also, while the majority finding of the industrial tribunal in the relevant case was that an employee of Reed Personnel had been unlawfully discriminated against and wrongfully dismissed, there was no evidence before the tribunal nor was there a finding that Alec Reed himself had anything to do with the dismissal *or the discrimination*. We apologise for the embarrassment caused to Mr Reed by this error.


LYNDA LEE-POTTER
Revealing portrait of a woman in agony
Daily Mail
John Paul is the only boy in a family of five. He has sour sisters – Melissa, Evelyn, Michelle and Pamela.
Mirror

O·B·N

"I have an enormous amount of respect for what Bernie has achieved with Formula One, and I think that he is a man who is unique in the world. There are certainly very few people who one could cite as being as comparatively successful as he is. I honestly believe that if you put Bernie Ecclestone in charge of anything it would not take too long before he would do remarkable things with that business — and he would soon supersede anything that a normal human being could achieve."

ADAM FAITH
Daily Telegraph *(Submitted by P.B. Richley)*

Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother celebrated her 98th birthday yesterday as living proof that one really can look younger every year.

Daily Telegraph

WHILE Rupert Murdoch sucks up to China in order to win commercial favours for his empire, his hacks, by turn, do their best to suck up to the boss.

Why else in an arts page interview with actress Mira Sorvino, would *Times* hackette Sarah Gristwood refer to a visit Sorvino made to Peking just before "the Tiananmen Square incident"; a weasel phrase that is only ever, ever employed by one other source — the government of the glorious People's Republic of China!

YOU can't keep David Sullivan and the Gold brothers down. City Trading, the company which markets their porn mags by post and through a chain of sex shops, has now leapt on to the Viagra bandwagon.

Though the pills won't be legally available in the UK until at least September, and even then only on prescription, under the business name Natural Herbal Research, City Trading is running newspaper ads offering "the potency pill that swept America".

In these one Dr Michael Preston, the impressive sounding "director of clinical studies," writes that "thousands of you, just like people in America, will have read about it, or heard about it, or seen it on TV. I am of course referring to the potency pill phenomenon which has given men sexual powers beyond their wildest dreams...

"Finally, after weeks of pressure on the American manufacturers, I have been able to obtain limited supplies," writes Preston before explaining (confusingly) that "the price reflects its value as a major breakthrough in the benefit to potency and the discovery of its power to boost." Or in other words, £60 for thirty tablets.

Those uncertain whether to accept this generous offer might first ponder the small print in the ads which reveals that Preston doesn't really exist. More importantly, while Viagra was developed in Britain and is actually manufactured near Cork in Ireland, what's actually on offer from City Trading is something called Vigorex — ie, a few American herbs in pill form. No doubt City Trading would be most upset if anyone confused the two.

WORLD OF HYPE

A SECRET lobbying operation involving Lord "£750-per-hour" Bell is being conducted to persuade the government that its appeasement policy towards the brutal regime of Bahrain, known for its appalling human rights record, should remain unchanged.

Documents obtained by the *Eye* show that Tim Bell and The Policy Partnership, a lobbying company led by Lord Gillford, are advising the Bahrain regime, which is notorious for torturing political opponents (*Eyes passim*).

Last month Lord Gillford, a former executive with the infamous lobbyist Ian Greer, wrote to the Bahrain ambassador in London, Shaikh Muburak Al Khalifa. He supplied a detailed "Options of Action" memo soon after three Bahraini dissidents had been granted political asylum by the home office.

The Bahrain embassy was furious that the three were not sent back home for retribution and Lord Gillford sympathised. "Whilst the foreign office are acutely embarrassed both by the actual decision taken by the home office as well as the way in which it was announced," he claimed, "they have little or no jurisdiction over the home office's policy/actions in the asylum arena."

The lobbyist suggested tough and exciting new initiatives by Bahrain to encourage the UK government to extradite dissidents. This included "a more open approach", a "visit by the Red Cross to Bahrain" and "fact-finding trips to Bahrain by British MPs". The 28-point action plan, copied to Bell's company, also involves directly lobbying Tony Blair, Robin Cook and other senior ministers. But there were more intriguing proposals:

"Prince Bandar [Saudi ambassador to the US] to express his concern through his own contacts at 10 Downing Street.

"Lord Prior [chairman of GEC and former Tory cabinet minister], in his capacity as chairman of Arab-British Chamber of Commerce, to write to Jack Straw setting out why these measures [granting dissidents refugee status] could jeopardise trade relations with Bahrain, Saudi and the UAE.

"Monitoring the actions of the dissidents."

This lobbying strategy was discussed by the Bahrain ambassador with Bell on 28 July, and a week later with Bertie Way, a Bell executive, over lunch at the ultra-expensive Bibendum restaurant. Hopefully no one spoiled the meal by mentioning the torture chambers on the Bahrain island of Nabih Salah.

MEANWHILE Tim Bell has still not decided what title to take. Lord Bell of Hampstead Heath, perhaps, after the scene of an unfortunate flashing incident some years ago? Or Baron Bogota, in honour of the white-powder substance emanating from that part of the world?

The niceties of etiquette clearly matter. "Many people have asked how they now address me," he noted in a memo to his staff last month, "and I must say I count myself among them. I believe the correct protocol is that when I have agreed with the Garter King of Arms as to how I will be styled, it will then appear in the *London Gazette* and as of that moment I become whatever it is the King and I settle on. However, you have always called me Tim until now, and I hope you will go on doing so.

"In a formal sense you should still call me Sir Tim Bell until the announcement in the *London Gazette*."

IT IS strange that none of the many "sites of the week" columns in the national press has found space to mention a new entrant in the exciting world of electronic publishing.

The arrival of http://www.ianpaisley.org has gone largely unheralded, yet this is certainly a site with a difference — not least because of its role as publicist for the European Institute of Protestant Studies.

The institute's purpose is to "expound the Bible and expose the Papacy" with the emphasis on the latter, and "it will assist all who are engaged in the struggle against the Papacy in both the religious and the secular worlds." Dedicated sections of the website are introduced with a frankness (and syntax) which only the truly deranged possess.

ERRORS OF ROME provides "an analysis of the major doctrinal errors", while ROME AND POLITICS provides "an exposure of the Vatican conspiracy to overthrow civil government from the twelfth century to the present, with particular emphasis on the history of Papal assaults against Britain and Rome's contemporary involvement in the EU".

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES "will serve as a type of watchman who warns loudly of those 'goats' in sheep's clothing" — apparently a reference to Billy Graham.

So far there's no specific attack on the satanic and papist-dominated Eurovision Song Contest, but it can only be a matter of time. Paisley must be hoping, however, that his eponymous venture avoids the fate of the Democratic Unionist Party site which was cruelly sabotaged by rabid Irish-Americans. They celebrated St Patrick's Day by hacking into it and attaching false links to sites run by the Vatican and Sinn (or even Sin) Fein.

HILARY Mordey can't quite believe it.

Getting to work nowadays takes her just 10 minutes, a far cry from the 19 years she spent commuting from Thames Ditton in Surrey to John Lewis' branch in Oxford Street.

Bristol Evening Post

LOTTERY NEWS

LOTTERY regulator Oflot moves in a mysterious way its wonders to perform. Charged with the simple duty of maximising the revenue for "good causes", it has continually sanctioned higher and higher prize payouts, 65 percent being the highest, at the expense of these selfsame good causes.

Now along comes a new game, Easy Play, and surprisingly the prize payout has been slashed to 40 percent — 10 percent below average. Does this mean a change of policy at Oflot, cutting prize money to increase the share for good causes?

Er, no. There are two operators behind this game — Vernons and Camelot — and prize money is being cut to give them even more loot. Oflot apparently feels that two operators need not just twice as much as one but *three times as much*. On its own Camelot gets 5 percent, but in this joint venture with Vernons the figure is 15 per cent.

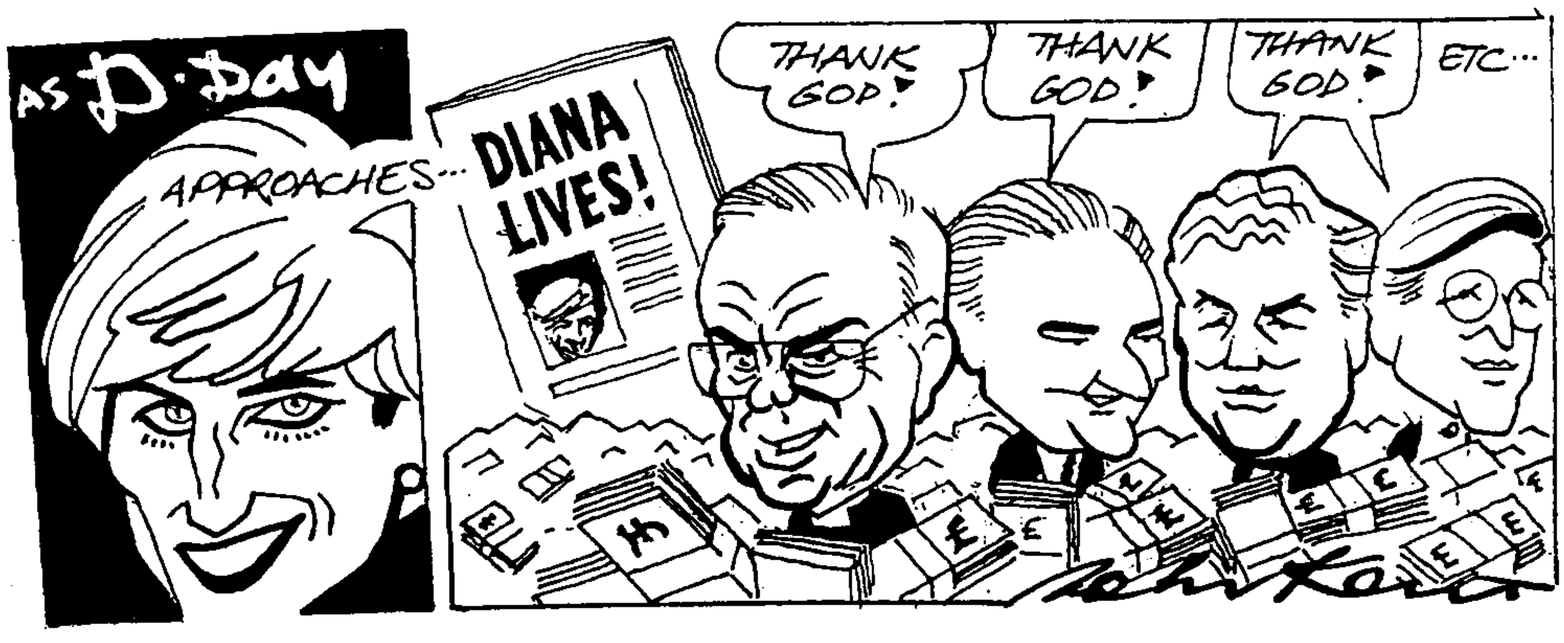
Trebles — quite literally — all round!

THERE is a rather pleasing picture of Camelot chief executive Tim Holley in the firm's annual review for 1998. In a section titled "Speaking Candidly" Tim answers the big question: "How can you justify the amount of directors' pay and bonuses?"

It is, he explains, all a matter of retaining people of "calibre" who are "highly skilled". Modesty prevents Tim from mentioning his own value: with remuneration of £636,000 a year he must be very high-calibre indeed.

He proves the point in answering another question, about scratchcards. "Instants still raise about 20 percent of money for the 'Good Causes'," he claims. This is an interesting reply from a man worth half a million quid of anyone's money, since the actual figure is around 10 percent.

Perhaps Camelot should try halving his pay to £318,000 and see if he notices the difference.



WITH the reshuffle over, August was meant to be the month when "new" Labour "turned the heat on the Scots Nats" and began to claw back at the Nationalists' steady advance in the polls. But this was not to be.

First gaffe of the month came courtesy of the self-declared "Hammer of the Nats" Helen Liddell, newly promoted to the Scottish office with special responsibility for campaigns, ie duffing up the SNP. "It is now time to take the gloves off," declared a resolute Liddell, only to disappear on an extended holiday three days later.

"New" Labour then attempted to turn up the heat by unleashing the new transport minister John Reid and his faithful supporter Calum MacDonald. The by now renamed "Summer of Scrutiny" campaign immediately came unstuck as the thuggish Reid lambasted Alex Salmond for promising to renationalise Scotland's railways. "The SNP is committed to an uncosted programme of fantasy policies," the red-faced Reid blustered, before defending Railtrack to incredulous hacks.

In the silence that followed only the sound of rustling papers could be heard as hacks began hunting for copies of Labour's pre-election "Covenant with Scotland" manifesto which had been enthusiastically endorsed by Tony Blair. The Blair "covenant" promised that the new government would, er, "create a publicly owned, publicly accountable railway system," in other words re-nationalise it.

When challenged on this strange anomaly the by now thoroughly vexed Reid ranted "I would not accept that Labour has made a U turn at all" before making a sharp exit.

● *See Footnotes, Page 26*

FRANK FIELD's apparent desire to speak the unspeakable on welfare reform is not the first time he has kicked against the pricks in his party.

Back in 1980 the *Eye* welcomed him into parliament (New Boys, 483) recalling his nickname of "Judas". This was earned in Labour circles for his outspoken attacks on the Wilson government when he was director of the Child Poverty Action Group. This was nothing compared to the bizarre events associated with him during the Euro elections in north Wales in 1984, however.

Labour candidate Ian Campbell found himself discredited in a series of quarter-page advertisements in the local papers, which claimed that Frank Field MP urged Labour party supporters to support Tom Ellis, the candidate for the SDP/Liberal alliance, who was then standing on a straightforward Liberal ticket.

Pleas from Campbell to Field to retract these reported views, and to canvass with him to disprove such presumably false claims, found no response. Neither did the demands of the Labour party's general secretary for a retraction: he was forced in a conversation with Campbell to admit that Field was simply a "maverick" over whom the party had no control.

Labour lost the seat by a small margin and Field never denied the views attributed to him — views which, according to the rules, should have led to his expulsion from the party.

WINCHESTER Lib Dem MP Mark Oaten was outraged when the vendor of a house he was interested in buying in the chocolate-box village of Cheriton upped the price by £30,000 shortly before contracts were due to be exchanged, forcing the deal to fall through.

So outraged was he, he issued a press release: "My wife Belinda and I are outraged..." it began. "It is a disgraceful trick... it has cost us an estimated £6,000 in solicitors' fees, searches [and] surveys ..." Mr Oaten vowed to work for a change in the law to protect other innocent homebuyers against the scourge of gazumping.

The Oatens' outrage brought a wry smile to the lips of Tony Evans of Hursley, another pretty village near Winchester where the Oatens had done some house-hunting. In May this year, after several viewings, the Oatens agreed to buy Mr Evans's house — but subsequently pulled out. Mr Evans shrugged his shoulders and put it down to experience. In late July, however, Belinda Oaten contacted Mr Evans to ask him if the property was still available. A price was agreed and Mr Oaten wrote to Mr Evans in confirmation, setting out proposed dates for urgent exchange of contracts and completion. Mr Evans instructed his solicitor to act with all speed, and turned away two other prospective buyers who had made firm offers.

Two days later, however, Mr Oaten blithely told Mr Evans he was withdrawing for a second time, because he had seen a house which suited him better. It is not thought Mr Oaten's campaign against gazumping will extend to providing legal protection for vendors who are left out of pocket by frivolous, time-wasting house-hunters.

THE outrage that greeted John Prescott's suggestion that we might give up our basic human right to sit in traffic jams was felt keenly in Aberdeen.

One of Prescott's advisers, Prof David Begg, of Robert Gordon University, in the granite city, suggested at a recent conference that Aberdeen would make an ideal test ground for "road pricing". The fact that the city centre is bordered by two rivers provides a perfect setting for unavoidable toll booths. People would either pay to drive their cars or take advantage of the fine bus service provided by mega-conglomerate First Bus.

Locals resented being guinea pigs because of geographical coincidence. They pointed out that Begg had proposed no such scheme for Edinburgh, on whose council he sits as transport convenor, but was quite prepared to put forward the idea in Aberdeen in his position as chair of transport management for the university — a post endowed and funded by First Bus plc.

NICK PALMER, "new" Labour MP for Broxtowe, Nottinghamshire, turned a 10,000 Tory majority into a 5,500 Labour one on 1 May last year. The general swing to Labour was boosted in Broxtowe because Palmer categorically assured voters that a plan for open-cast coal mining at Shortwood Farm, on green belt land, would be killed stone dead if Labour was elected. Many former Tory voters switched sides because of Labour's pledge.

RJB Mining's plan is bitterly opposed by locals, who fear it will cause enormous environmental damage while providing few jobs. "If the Tories are reelected, the project has a good chance of approval," a pre-election leaflet distributed by Palmer said. "Labour is different. I have a written promise from Frank Dobson, Shadow Environment Secretary, that he will respect the wishes of the local council."

In December 1996 Dobson had launched a document "Opencast Mining: Too High A Price" which assured residents of the coal-rich Erewash Valley, on the borders of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, that Labour would implement a "presumption against" new open-cast mines unless there was overwhelming local support. "Labour believes that open-cast mining is one of the most environmentally destructive activities in the UK and that its growth has been at the expense of the deep mining industry," it said.

On 1 May this year, Kieran and Susan Lee of Eastwood, Notts, won a newspaper contest to meet the Blairs at 10 Downing Street. When teacher Mr Lee asked Blair about the open-cast issue, the prime minister personally assured him that the government would honour its pre-election promises. At the end of July, the government — which in opposition had instructed parliamentary candidate Palmer to campaign against the open-cast mine — gave its approval to RJB's plans.

• His mother-in-law, Margaret Thatcher, was repeatedly accused of witchcraft.

Witch House brochure, Salem

HAGUEWATCH

WILLIAM HAGUE's "Listening to Britain" tour has of course been a huge PR success. His drive to rebrand the Tory party as a young, vibrant, forward-looking grassroots organisation was launched at the Lion hotel in Shrewsbury last month in front of an audience whose average age was, er, around 80.

Sadly they were apparently deemed not suitable to be photographed with the 37-year-old Tory leader — especially in the light of Archie Norman's cull of over-50s at central office which was due to be announced the next day.

Later, a visit to a salmon farm in Orkney also proved embarrassing. With a gaggle of local photographers and hacks in tow, Hague refused to put on the white coat and plastic hat that his tour of the processing plant demanded. Courageously he remained firm in the face of the health and hygiene rules that were quoted at him by the fish farm staff, and insisted an exception be made in his case. It was then that a helpful hack pointed out the legislation he was refusing to comply with had been brought in by the last Conservative administration.

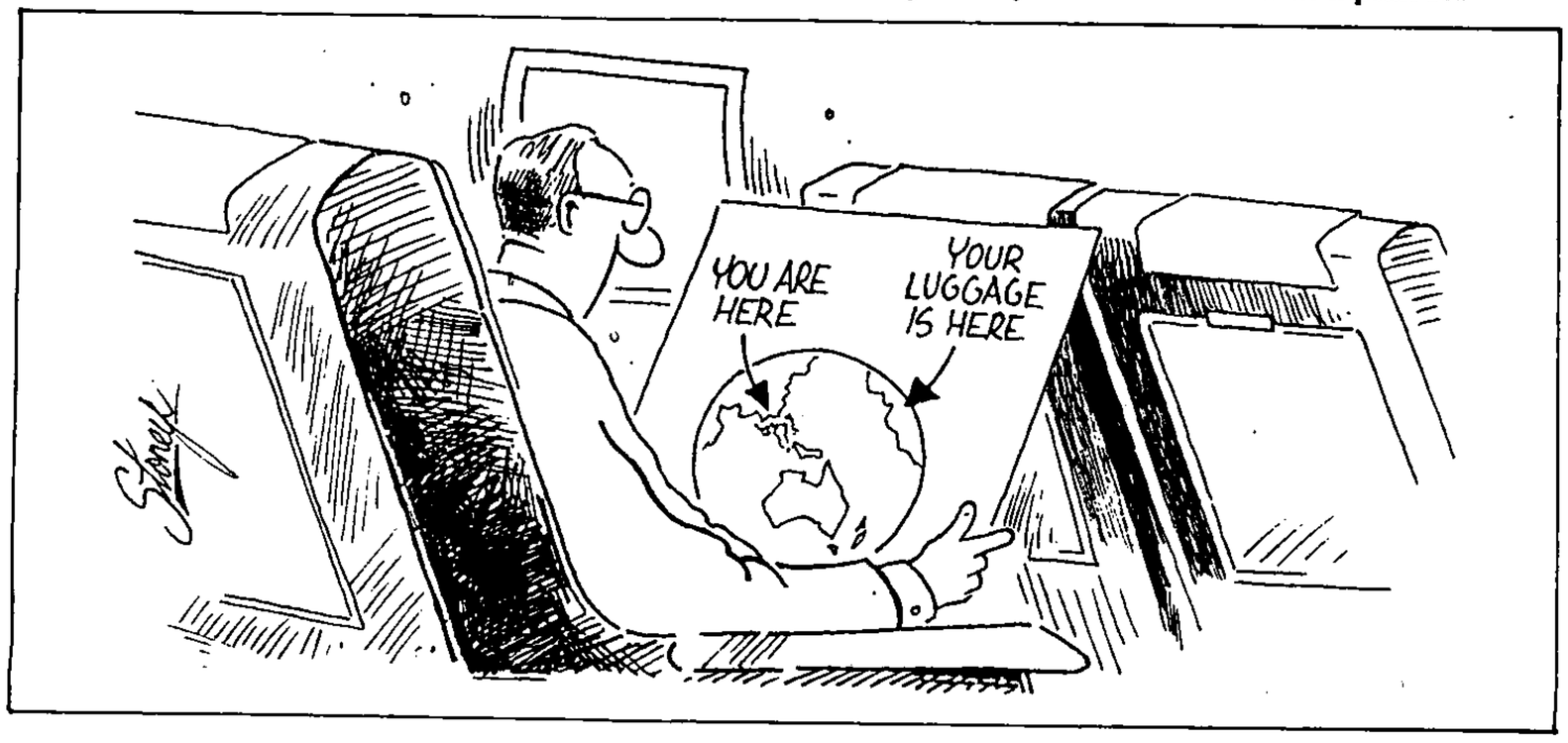
Stuck between a rock-salmon and a hard plaice, Hague opted for the least foolish option: appearing to readers of the *Orcadian* in a slightly silly costume. The party must be giving thanks for the profound lack of interest shown by the national press in the Tories' "Britain's Not Listening" tour.

GOOD to see the Tories fighting hard to regain their lost ideological ground.

Internet browsers who chance upon the web page for the Thatcherite Conservative Way Forward group and are keen to read strong new policy statements from rightwingers are in for a disappointment, however.

On the policy page all is quiet, and only one paper is recorded there. It reads: "Conservative Way Forward. This page was last updated on Sunday 25 February 1996. Policy papers: An Agenda for the Intergovernmental Conference — Issued by CWF — 17th May 1995. Return to additional information."

The future of Conservatism is in safe hands.



"He may drink a lot of milk, Mrs Turley, but it's not Crohn's Disease — I'm afraid he's got Crony's Disease"

FORMER red Clydesider turned media mogul and now Scottish industry minister Gus MacDonald will be blessing the moment Donald Dewar gave him a job in government.

Within hours of announcing that he was to give up his job as chairman of the Scottish Media Group, the first rumblings of threatened industrial action came from the group's staff who are members of the broadcasters' union, Bectu.

For such has been McDonald's conversion from revolutionary socialist to Thatcherite captain of industry that low wages and casualisation had been the unfortunate lot of all too many of his minions.

FOLLOWING Labour's sudden disinclination to limit tobacco sponsorship (which had nothing to do with a £1m donation from Formula One's Bernie Ecclestone), the party has again brought cheer to the carcinogenic sector.

When Tony Blair visited Scotland last month in a desperate attempt to bridge the 14 percent poll gap between Labour and the Scottish National party (SNP), Scottish office industry minister Brian Wilson issued a press release challenging the SNP's economic policies. Tucked alongside the usual queries about public spending and subsides, Wilson slammed the SNP policy on smoking. It aims to lower consumption by adding a 15p health tax to each packet of cigarettes sold in Scotland.

Wilson complained this would lead to massive smuggling, with traffickers operating nightly runs across the hazardous Gretna trail, and it must be opposed. Naturally, preventing bootlegging is the sole reason for Labour's opposition to the SNP policy — and the fact that it will delight Blair's new friends, the tobacco manufacturers, is pure coincidence.

HOME secretary Jack Straw is getting into bed with some rum types while building private prisons — people like the Florida-based Wackenhut Corporation.

Straw has just announced that Wackenhut is preferred bidder to build and run one of his "secure training centres" for 12 to 14-year-olds in Medomsley, Co Durham. Wackenhut is also preferred bidder for a £32m young offenders' institute at Pucklehurst, near Bristol. It already operates at Lowndham Grange Prison and has been managing Doncaster jail since 1995.

However, Wackenhut has had links with far right organisations and a history of practices that appear diametrically opposed to the few principles left to "new" Labour. It once made money from holding files on 2.5 million Americans which employers could check to ensure they had no "subversives" on their payroll. And when blacklisting was investigated in the 70s, Wackenhut donated its files to the Church League, a far-right group which continued to check names.

Today Wackenhut's National Research Centre of Athens, Ohio, offers "pre-employment screening services". And when Aleyska, an oil consortium led by Exxon, was worried by the activities of an environmentalist, Charles Hamel, it hired Wackenhut. The company's agents followed Hamel but their intensive pursuit ended in a law suit. This led to a senate committee concluding that "Wackenhut agents engaged in a pattern of deceitful, grossly offensive and potentially, if not blatantly illegal conduct".

Mr Straw's preferred bidder continues to offer extraordinary services in the US. Its "skilled investigators blend in with other workers to become management's eyes and ears in the workforce" and offer the latest "surveillance" devices.

However, Straw may still not save any money. In Texas, where prison privatisation is well-advanced, the department of criminal justice became so tired of being called out by private jails to chase escapers and quell riots it began charging for services. In 1997 Wackenhut paid $10,872 for guards, horses and tracking dogs to hunt an escaper.

AFTER a pisspoor performance as the poor man's Frank Field (junior minister at the department of social security) Keith Bradley has been moved sideways to deputy chief whip.

Well, at least the junk food-loving Labour MP for Withington knows something about his new job — in particular about Labour members who have trouble voting with their colleagues.

From 1982 to 1984 Bradley was one of a rump of Labour councillors on Manchester city council voting for a set of quasi-Trotskyite policies in defiance of the group whip. He was given a stern warning about the need for party discipline.

The Sun switched allegiance from the Conservatives to Labour shortly after but now the newspaper is showing signs of unhappiness with the Labour government, it claims it helped to pout in power.

Mallorca Daily Bulletin

THOUGH detailed minutes are taken of cabinet meetings, according to a surprising recent parliamentary answer from the prime minister, nobody knows how long the meetings last.

At the beginning of July Labour backbencher Andrew Mackinlay, MP for Thurrock, was disturbed by authoritative rumours that cabinet meetings are increasingly dominated by routine reports, and that detailed political discussion — and dissent — have been ruled out. So he sought to ask the prime minister the following question: "On what occasions since the general election has the Cabinet met and what was the duration of each meeting"?

The Commons clerks refused to table the question referring to a ruling from Tony Blair that all information about cabinet and cabinet committee meetings was secret. Mackinlay exploded and tried to get the table office decision overruled. When he failed, he went to the government whips' office on 30 July and told them he would raise the matter from the floor of the House.

Within an hour of his ultimatum, the question was tabled and Mackinlay got a grovelling apology from the Commons table office. On 31 July the prime minister replied, as follows: "Since May 1997, cabinet has usually met once a week when parliament is in session. No record is kept of the duration of each cabinet meeting".

WELSH secretary Ron Davies is busy reminding the Taffia just how charming he can be. With skirmishing building up as to who will lead Labour in the new Welsh assembly, Ron's mates have been busy extracting "endorsements" for the great man.

With all Welsh Labour MPs now contacted and the payroll vote secured, Ron's canvassers have moved on to the 150 or so Labour approved hopefuls for next year's assembly elections. Since approved candidates know they will have little chance of actually being selected if they fail to, er, approve of Ron Davies, most are falling over themselves to sign up to his campaign.

One caller to a Welsh newspaper, a member of the Wales Labour party executive, complained that "Ron's camp is bullying people. There is a lot of terrible stuff going on. It's not nice." So keen is Davies to ensure the vote is stitched up, he has told his incredulous opponent Rhodri Morgan he wants the matter decided by a "special delegate conference" instead of being conducted by the once hallowed one-member-one-vote system. John Smith will be spinning in his grave (yet again).

ONE latter day parliamentary Labour party rascal is the veteran Ogmore MP, Sir Ray Powell, who has infuriated the party hierarchy with his spirited attacks on devolution and his refusal to agree to tuition fees.

As a former opposition whip, Powell has been particularly adept at avoiding the wrath of his successors in the previous parliamentary session by immediately disappearing from view upon spotting any of his successor whips and by setting up a series of early warning systems to prevent himself being apprehended by them in the tearoom.

Having successfully kept the whips at bay on one particular occasion, Powell slipped into their Commons office, leaving a note admonishing them for their dismal failure to contact him in order to dissuade him from rebelling on a vote, which he had been forced to do "reluctantly".

'Backbiter'

LORDS FOR HIRE: A NEW *EYE* SERIES

LIKE MPs, peers of the realm are allowed to take money from commercial interests and in return advise and promote them.

Technically they are not supposed to lobby on behalf of their paymasters. Instead peers are asked "to act on their personal honour". But there is no mechanism for enforcing this "rule". In reality influence-peddling is as prominent as ever.

There are far more peers in the pay of outsiders than is publicly known. In this issue we list those who are directors or consultants of companies that manufacture and sell weapons.

LIFE PEERS

Lord Bramall: *Director of Vickers Defence Systems Ltd.*
Lord Brookes: *Life president of Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds Ltd (GKN).*
Baroness Dunn: *Director of General Electric Company plc (GEC).*
Lord Fanshawe: *Member of Pratt and Whitney International Advisory Council (USA).*
Lord Gillmore: *Director of Vickers plc.*
Baroness Hogg: *Director of GKN.*
Lord Inge: *Director of Racal Electronics plc, Consultant to Vickers plc.*
Lord Prior: *Chairman of GEC plc.*
Lord Rees-Mogg: *Director of GEC plc.*
Lord Simpson: *Managing director of GEC plc.*
Lord Taylor: *Consultant to British Aerospace plc; and to British Aerospace: Sema.*
Lord Wakeham: *Director of Vosper Thornycroft Holdings Ltd.*
Lord Weinstock: *Managing director of GEC plc, Chairman of GEC Alsthom N.V.*

HEREDITARY PEERS

Lord Glenarthur: *Adviser to British Aerospace plc.*
Viscount Massereene: *Director of Atkin Grant and Lang Ltd (gun-making company).*
Lord Trefgarne (ex-defence procurement minister): *Adviser to Dassault Aviation.*

EYE TV

The Rankin Challenge (BBC1)
Easy Money (BBC1)
All Over The Shop (BBC1)
A Word In Your Ear (BBC1)

RATHER as global warming has the effect of making all climactic conditions more extreme, so the summer television schedules tend to worsen trends already present.

Those who think there is always too much sport on television really get something to complain about, and critics of the frequency of repeats on TV are truly vindicated as *Harry Enfield's Christmas Special* shows in August.

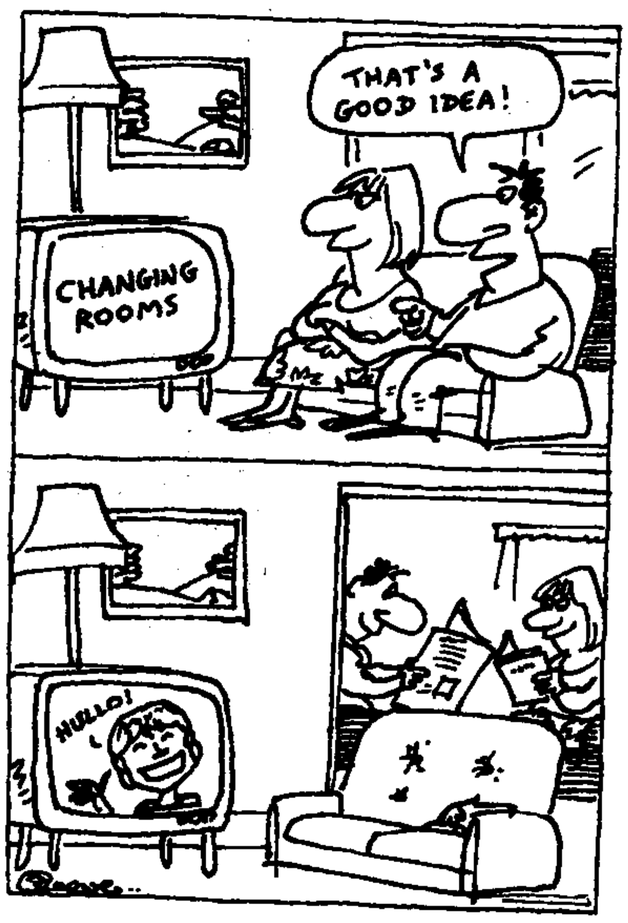
And daytime television — a wasteland for inspiration even during telly's try-hard summer and spring — becomes even more of a waking nightmare. If daily editions of *Ready Steady Cook* and *Call My Bluff* are the A-team, you can imagine what the holiday relief might be like.

With most of the top TV chefs off on gastronomic tours of France or Italy, cookery shows, that daytime staple, turn to increasingly obscure cuisiniers. *The Rankin Challenge* is hosted by Ulsterman Paul Rankin, who, in a dreary kitchen spin on *Changing Rooms*, visits a viewer's home where he brushes up their cooking skills while preparing a meal with them. Where most telly chefs cultivate a fun-loving image, Rankin is given to stern Paisleyite pronouncements like "Great-tasting food deserves a good-looking table!"

Then there are the quizzes. Having read a *Daily Mail* article about how the pub quiz has become the new obsession of both working and middle classes, BBC chiefs are now desperately stockpiling question-and-answer formats. The new Radio 4 schedule is based around them and the viewer of BBC1 daytime can get through several hours without ever hearing a presenter make a statement.

The only thing that makes the experience bearable is to imagine the tricky phone calls between agents and actors, for Equity members are by far the main source of panellists for these shows. Recognising their management's number on the mobile number display, the luvvies excitedly answer.

Expecting that long-awaited summons to the Stratford Lear or South Bank Rosalind, they are informed that they have been offered a position on *Easy Money*, a new financial quiz show in which they might just get to make tacky puns about deposits and withdrawals. And so Wendy Richard from *EastEnders* and



Clive Mantle from *Casualty* get the chance to check their knowledge of stocks and shares with "top hairdresser Patrick Cameron" and "wine expert Oz Clarke".

Or, for a real acting challenge, there's *All Over The Shop*, billed as a "celebrity shopping quiz". Here host Paul Ross invites "Angie Freeman from *Coronation Street*" to partner children's TV hero Tim Vincent in a series of rounds based around packing and purchasing. Their opponents are Angela Rippon and the now obligatory stand-up comic, a position here filled by some mugging slob called Peter Kay.

Despite the demographic and ideological shifts of recent years, daytime TV is still aimed squarely at an audience of what the Americans now call homemakers. And you have to wonder which patronising idiot came up with the theory that women whose life invariably includes too much shopping would want to relax by watching a quiz about buying.

Although the several desperate rounds make use of real products — a tasting game, a "real or fake" test — the series shows a terror of giving offence to any manufacturers. The jumpy look of the show makes you suspect that caustic comments have been edited out. The only way the viewer can get through an episode is to fantasise about a rival celebrity quiz — *Can I Just Stop You There?* — in which Richard Madeley, Jeffrey Archer and Stuart Hall are hilariously questioned on their misunderstandings with store detectives.

A Word In Your Ear is a supposedly upmarket daytime quiz hosted by Gordon Burns, late of *The Krypton Factor*, who promises "a celebrity-based verbal communications challenge where we invariably discover — in the most entertaining way — just how difficult it is to give accurate and precise instructions".

In reality you get a kind of literary Mr and Mrs show, in which teams of two are required to pass on information to each other through screens and other barriers. The obligatory actor is Colin Baker, a very ex-*Doctor Who*, while hack Simon Hoggart improbably partners Radio 5 Live's Sybil Ruscoe.

It is in Hoggart's performance that the really weird aspect of these daytime quizzes becomes clear. Peak-time quizzes are almost always ironic these days, with the score frequently an optional extra. But, in daytime, the points are added up by Burns and Ross with the solemnity of Magnus Magnusson. To see Hoggart, a highly talented satirist in real-life, punching the air in triumph after a minor victory in a drawing contest was surreal. All daytime quiz shows raise one always unspoken question: why do they do it?

'Square Eyes'

Plugged In

ROYAL EXCLUSIVE — Fergie has signed a £50,000 deal to host a Sky TV series — and she's giving every penny to charity.

Two months ago she secretly filmed a pilot programme for Sky. Sky boss Elisabeth Murdoch said last night: "Having been through so much in her own life Sarah has a unique ability to connect with other people by sharing experiences."... The series will be filmed next month, with the first show going out on Sky One on Monday October 5th at 9am.

The Sun

An occasional column devoted to cross-media plugs masquerading as news.

MEDIA NEWS

TONY "Head Prefect" Hall, chauffeur-driven boss of BBC news and current affairs, is supervising an exciting 20-year building programme designed to make the corporation "more accessible" to its long-suffering licence payers. "We want to make them feel it's theirs," he gushes, "and not some secret organisation run by a cabal of unfeeling mandarins."

Weary subordinates recall that it was the embryo mandarin Hall who ordered the removal of all noticeboards in the TV newsroom (which were "accessible" to everyone) because he disliked the newspaper cuttings and cartoons critical of his regime which adorned them.

They were replaced by a new noticeboard, protected by locked glass doors and carrying only official management diktats. Hall justified this exercise in anti-*glasnost* by claiming the old boards were "a fire hazard".

BIRTSPEAK

Project Manager Pilot Tribes

This senior role is offered as a one year attachment. The most important outcome of the BBC wide "Marketing Project" carried out by the DG has been our new audience segmentation work, known as the "Many faces of the UK", or "100 Tribes". To build on the work developed so far, we are now looking for a project manager to drive forward implementation with our "Pilot Tribes" and help realise our vision of a truly audience facing organisation. (Our "Pilot Tribes" are those audience groups we need most urgently to consume more BBC services or shift their approval of the BBC's services.)

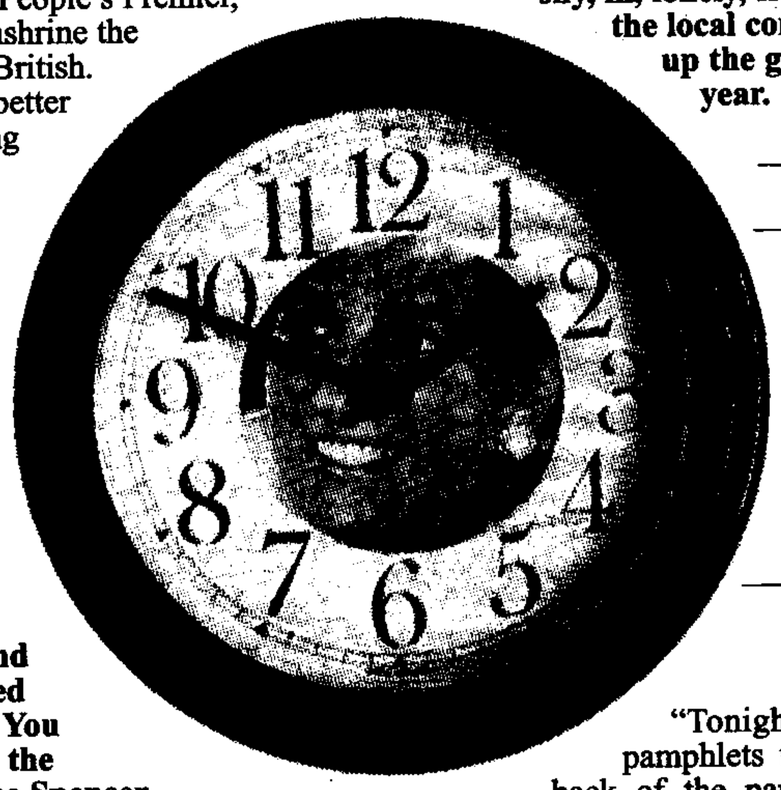
Leading a team of up to eight full and part time "Tribe Champions", you will co-ordinate audience and market research, sophisticated analysis and help develop vital business plans for each "Pilot Tribe". Liaising with strategists, schedulers, senior commissioners, programme makers and marketeers, you will recommend ways of best utilising our entire output and services across all media. In short, you will help drive the BBC well in the next century.

— Job advert in Ariel, *in-house BBC magazine.*

Watchdog
A HUGE CORPORATION
RUN BY INCOMPETENT MANAGEMENT!!
TURNING OUT SUBSTANDARD GOODS AT INFLATED COSTS...
WHOSE PRACTICES SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE PUBLIC'S ATTENTION...
BUT THEY PAY OUR WAGES
WINK!

DIANABALLS ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

"As the nation prepares to mourn the first anniversary of the tragic loss of the People's Princess, surely the People's Premier, Tony Blair, could enshrine the true feelings of the British. There would be no better tribute than renaming the country of her birth, Northamptonshire, 'Dianashire'. *Allan Pearcey, London N3.*"
— Letter on ITV Teletext, 3 August.



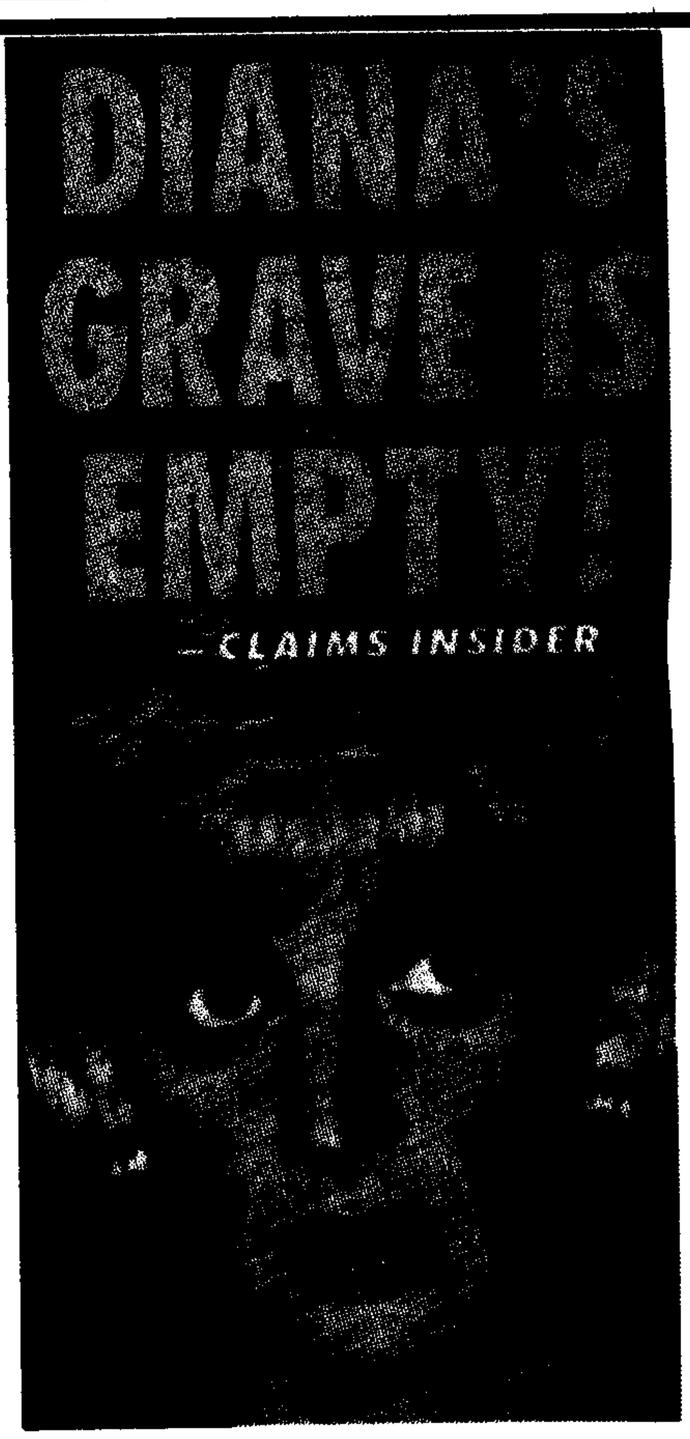
"A memorial to Princess Diana is necessary for the many people around the world who loved and respected her. You snidely referred to the memorial site at the Spencer family home as 'Dianaland'; just call it Althorp. *Jeanne McCartin, Ossining, NY.*

"The legend of Diana is just beginning. The people of Britain are very proud of their beautiful princess, who lit up the world with her unique smile. *Frank A. Lopez, Redwood City, Calif.*"
— Letters in *Time* magazine.

"Princess Diana should be remembered with gentle dignity. Why not take single flowers to shy, ill, lonely, frail or hard-up people in the local community? Better still, keep up the good deed throughout the year.
A. Currie, Chestfield, Kent."
— Letter in *Mail on Sunday*, 2 August.

Advert for a first-anniversary limited-edition clock, "produced to commemorate the event and the Princess's life", from the Renfrewshire World, *24 July 1998.*

"Tonight I will be delivering pamphlets to 250 householders. On the back of the pamphlets is an advertisement featuring souvenir photos of the late Diana, Princess of Wales. Such was her charisma and charm that still affects me that I have folded my pamphlets especially so I will see her smiling face as I deliver them. She will brighten up this cold night ahead of me."
— Letter in *Australian Women's Weekly*.



Front-page headline in National Enquirer *("America's Hottest Weekly"), 4 August 1998.*

Confident and arrogant, the men behind the ruling hand
Descended on Diana like an eagle on a dove
Virginally suitable, so dutiful, so beautiful
An innocent aristocrat inside a velvet glove

Moulding her and scolding her, they set about enfolding her
Enmeshing her in protocol like spiders with a fly
Arranging her, deranging her, they failed to see the change in her
But smiled in secret victory when the public saw her cry...

Underestimation of the feelings of a nation
Brought about the slaughter of the eagle by the dove
The girl they thought so biddable was womanhood, formidable
In death they found a diamond fist inside her velvet glove.
— "The Puppetmasters" by Sarah Ridgely, a winning entry from *Writing* magazine's "Diana: Write Your own Tribute" competition, as judged by Jeffrey Archer.

"Every small boy wished his mum looked like her at school sports day, taking part in the mums' race and enjoying crazy rides at theme parks. Every woman whose marriage had failed and who wanted to lash out at the shitty bloke she had married knew how she felt when her marriage broke up. Every young man fancied her rotten and fantasised about walking into a restaurant/the local pub/the football match with a bird like her."
— "Letter to Oz" by Valerie Chidson, winner in the prose section of *Writing* magazine's Diana Tribute competition, as judged by Jeffrey Archer.

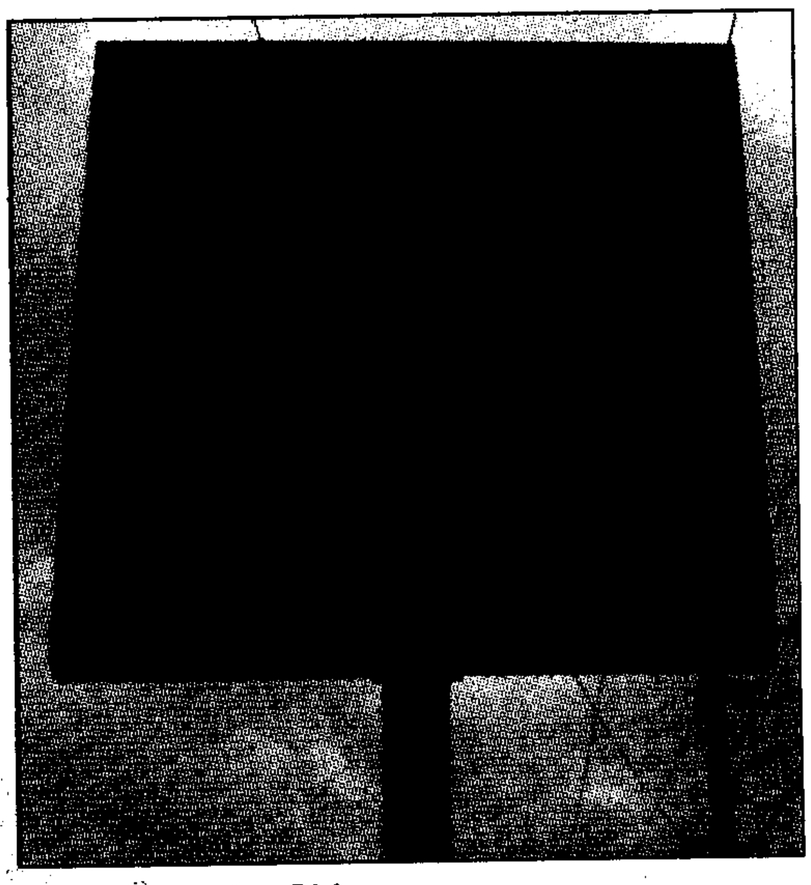
"Various theories have been floated. The one I quite like — actually I think I may have invented it — is that Leo [Leonardo DiCaprio] is the beneficiary of Post-Diana syndrome. Having just rediscovered our capacity for love, sweat and tears, the need to sate out repressed emotions, we are desperate for a new hero. A new hero like Diana... DiCaprio not only bears an extraordinary physical resemblance to the princess, but he shares the same tics and nuances. Like Diana he's sexy without being threatening."
— Simon Hattenstone, the *Guardian*.

Hey, look here Dodi,
what have you done with Lady Di?
He led her to bed
then from there
under the Pont de l'Alma.
Under the Pont de l'Alma
flows the Seine
and glide princesses
in Mercedes...
Total screen.
Full stop.
Ah, Dodi, Dodi,
What have you done with Lady Di?
— "Lament for Lady Di" by Jean Baudrillard, in *After Diana* (published by Verso).

Sign in a Cambridgeshire zoo.

"Emma Noble heard the news on TV after a night out. 'I was devastated. I was in total shock, but my first thoughts were of William and Harry. I couldn't get them out of my mind.'

"Mariella Frostrup was relaxing at home... 'I realise it taught us we can pull together. That's a positive thing, though it took a tragedy to discover it'."
— *Cosmopolitan*, September 1998 issue.



Sign in Amelia, Ohio.

DOING THE ROUNDS

AN AORTIC aneurysm is an abnormal bulging of the major vessel that carries blood out of the heart: three percent of men over 50 have one, usually without any symptoms, and at least a third of these will go on to rupture. This is bad news.

Symptoms include severe abdominal pain, often radiating to the back or groin, and collapse. The emergency surgery involves clamping the aorta above the leak and inserting a Dacron graft. Without treatment, the death rate is 100 percent. With treatment, the death rate depends on how quickly it is picked up: large ruptures at home have a 90 percent death rate, in hospital the average survival is 50 percent.

However, a much better outcome can be achieved by screening. With ultrasound, most of the aneurysms can be picked up and operated on before they rupture. When this policy to screen men over 60 was introduced in Chichester, the death rate from ruptured aneurysms fell to zero (ie there weren't any) and the death rate from the elective operations was just 1 percent.

In two-thirds of the cases, the aneurysms may not have ruptured but the pick-up rate was far higher than, say, cervical screening, and comparatively many more lives were saved. And although expensive in terms of the initial outlay for screening and the elective operating, the patients didn't require the prolonged intensive care that those having emergency surgery often need. This can lead to a miserable prolonged death from kidney failure and infection.

After the elective operation the men are then brought back to the mortality rate of their peers (ie they live as long as men who don't have aneurysms), giving them up to 20 years extra of high quality living. So presumably every major centre around the country is offering screening. Alas, no.

Men who have worked hard and paid tax all their lives are still thought of as low priority patients, it seems. The cynical view is that it is much cheaper to let them collapse at home and die. As one consultant put it: "We're probably losing 60,000 men a year — enough to fill Old Trafford to the rafters — through not screening men over 50. Compare that with cervical screening, where we screen all women aged 20 to 65 and save a thousand lives a year."

Without screening, your best bet for survival is to call an emergency ambulance if you get the above symptoms and go straight to hospital. Incidentally, this swift action also applies to heart attacks — central, crushing chest pain lasting more than 10 minutes, possibly going down the left arm and

"I demand a first opinion"

making you feel bloody awful needs an ambulance immediately. Your chances are much better if you have thrombolytic drugs (for blood thinning) on a coronary care unit within 90 minutes rather than faffing about for your GP.

At the other end of life, MD's top tip is to take jaundice in babies seriously. Any baby who is still yellow at two to three weeks needs to be assessed. The cause is usually breast feeding, but biliary atresia, a congenital malformation that prevents bile drainage, must be excluded. And yes, there's a scandal here too.

If children are identified early (within six weeks), often they can have a complex operation called a Kasai procedure that takes up to five hours but can improve drainage through the biliary tract. At best, this can completely obviate the need for a liver transplant or at least postpone it for many years. At worst, it does nothing other than subject a very young baby to life threatening surgery.

Because the condition is rare, only 50 such operations are carried out in the UK each year. So you'd think they're all done in two or three highly specialised centres who do enough of the procedures to ensure they're good at them. Unbelievably, there are 14 centres doing the operation, with many carrying out just one or two a year. King's Hospital, London, and Birmingham are the centres of excellence, doing most of the operations and clearly they should be doing them all — their success rates are double those of the dabblers. So if your child is offered this operation at another centre, insist on going to King's or Brum.

M.D.

SIGNAL FAILURES
Focus on Heathrow Express

THE long-awaited mainline rail service to Heathrow, opened by Tony Blair this summer, is, like the prime minister, another sad legacy of Thatcherism.

The Heathrow express, operated by the British Airports Authority (BAA), was hailed by politicians as an example of integrated transport. One only has to try to buy a ticket to realise it is nothing of the sort.

The need for a mainline link to Heathrow which would reduce road traffic and relieve the groaning Piccadilly line has been discussed for decades. Such a line, went the theory, would also make Heathrow easier to reach from outside London and allow much of the rail network to capitalise on demand for surface travel to the giant airport. In Geneva, Zurich, Amsterdam and even Gatwick, large numbers of passengers arrive by mainline trains. But the Heathrow project was delayed so long it meets none of these objectives. By the time it was implemented the project had lost all sight of social and environmental goals and profit was the only motive.

Heathrow express is Britain's most expensive rail service. A standard single fare costs £10 for the 15-minute journey. First class is twice as much. Tickets are not discounted if booked with another train fares, as is normal elsewhere; and the service opened without even a combined ticket for London Underground. Shuttling between London and Heathrow, the new train passes non-stop through stations which would have given easy access to and from the west.

BAA has carefully positioned the service to appeal to people who hate congested road journeys and can afford to segregate themselves from the masses (including airport and airline staff) who will continue to clog the Piccadilly line with luggage or the roads with their cars while the express has ample spare capacity.

BAA has plans for this capacity. There remain vast regions, including the Midlands, the north-west, the south-east and East Anglia, which could be served by direct electric trains to Heathrow. Which of these will BAA pick first? None. It wants to start another service to central London (to St Pancras, a few miles from Paddington) and then one to Paris!

The French already have good rail access to their own airports; now the plan is to give them similar access to Heathrow — while the Brits sweat in cars, coaches or tube trains.

'Dr B. Ching'

Number crunchings

26 Number of hundreds of millions of £££s the Jubilee Line extension will cost

■ Number of trains that have been built the wrong size to fit the tracks

Down on the Funny Farm

A TREAT every dairy farmer looks forward to is his regular hygiene inspection by an official from what used to be ADAS, but which the Maffia now calls its "Farming and Rural Conservation Agency".

These visits can take as little as 20 minutes, but the farmer must pay £90 a time for the privilege of being inspected. From the officials' point of view it is thus desirable to find at least one thing wrong because this means they can make a return visit to check that the fault has been put right, justifying another bill for £90.

One North Yorkshire inspector picked up a farmer for not having a lock on his dairy door. That cost the usual £90, after which the farmer promptly installed a lock. He was then told by letter that the inspector had returned when the farmer was out and found he couldn't get into the dairy because it was locked. This visit would also cost £90. But he would have to make a third "inspection" to confirm the lock was on the door. This would cost another £90.

A variation on the theme was recently enjoyed by Cumbrian dairy farmer Jim Webster who, with the blessing of his inspector, had been washing his hands in the farm's back kitchen. This was accepted as meeting the requirements of the Dairy Products (Hygiene) Regulations 1995, implementing EC directive 92/46, that dairy farms should have "suitable facilities near the place of milking to enable milkers and persons handling milk to wash their hands and arms".

But when the inspector, a Mr Gray, called again, he told Jim the agency had "reinterpreted" this passage. If Jim got really dirty, the official explained, it would not be appropriate for him to enter a kitchen used for preparing food. The washing facility must now be installed in the dairy.

But, Jim pointed out, the rules stress that the dairy is also a food production area. Was it not odd that he should have to install a washbasin in a building expected to reach the highest standards of cleanliness, so he could wash his hands there when he was too dirty to enter the back kitchen?

Recently, Yorkshire farmer Tom Cummings, a friend of Jim's, was ordered by another inspector, a Mr Lovell, to remove the washing facilities which had been in his immaculate, tile-hung dairy since the 1980s. This was because there had been a "reinterpretation" of the regulations and it was obviously unhygienic to wash in what should be a food preparation area. But Mr Lovell told another North Yorkshire farmer, Geoff Bean, that under the same regulations, he should have a washing facility in his milking parlour.

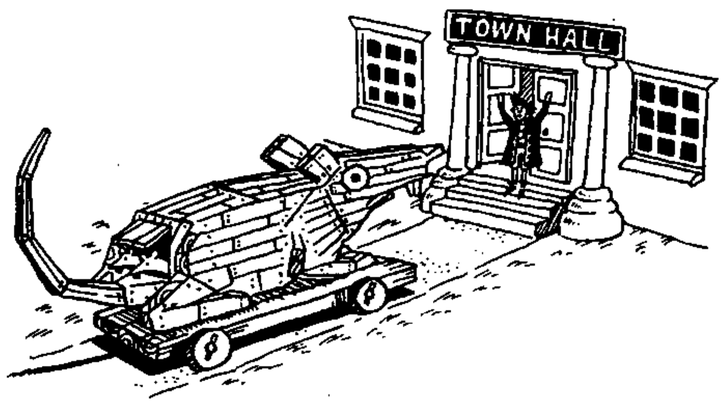
The purpose of all these bewildering *diktats*, one might have thought, was to maintain milk at the highest quality. But when, on an earlier visit, Mr Lovell was asked about this, the inspector somewhat recklessly remonstrated: "The quality of the milk is a side issue. We are not interested in that."

He was informed, in a playful fashion, that the room in which he was standing was fitted with a video camera for security. When the official was told his words had been recorded, "he suddenly became incredibly courteous and the visit was concluded in record time". At a cost, of course, of £90.

'Even Newer Muckspreader'

NEW OLD SAYINGS

There's no use crying over spilt mink



Rotten Boroughs

Burgher King

GENEROUS jobs-for-the-boys schemes on Isle of Wight council have seen no fewer than 34 officials take early retirement only then to receive highly paid consultancies from their former paymaster.

The revolving door policy was condemned by the council's personnel and sourcing committee at the beginning of the year, but a new scandal has arisen.

Morris Barton, who led the Lib Dem authority for 16 years, stood down from the leadership in May only to take up a £15,000-a-year part-time consultancy with the Wight Training and Enterprise (WTE) quango. Barton was a director of the quango until less than a week before the job was advertised, and WTE is part-funded by the council on which Barton still serves.

This isn't the first time Barton has benefited from council-funded quangos. Public outcry forced him to abandon a £4,000-a-year post editing a four-page quarterly bulletin for the rural community council. He originally stated he was doing the job for free, and when accounts proved otherwise he became incandescent with rage that anyone should deny him the right to earn a living.

Barton was further infuriated when Newport Riverside Centre for the disabled, also heavily dependent on council funding, turned down his offer of PR consultancy work.

Islington

TROUBLED times for Meg Hillier, glamorous 29-year-old mayor of Islington, who before the May elections worked tirelessly to prevent closure of an old people's home, the Homestead, in her Sussex ward in north Islington.

"If you are going to close an old people's home, why close The Homestead?" she told her local paper, the *Highbury & Islington Express*. "It's purpose-built, it's all on one storey, it has a self-contained garden and people really feel it's their home."

With Labour holding power by the skin of its teeth, she then used her casting vote at a full council meeting to throw out a Lib Dem amendment offering a reprieve to, er, the Homestead.

Meanwhile Andy Jennings, Islington's new £70,000 head of housing, is making himself very unpopular with his rank and file following a series of deaths of elderly people living in sheltered accommodation.

First there was the death of 86-year-old Edith Rockman in a fire in her sheltered home, Minerva Lodge. Although she pressed her emergency alarm three times, workers at Islington's emergency centre, Helpline, put the phone down on her repeatedly and failed to call the fire brigade. An official report found the death could have been prevented.

A week later Mr Charlie Gelmini, also 86, suffered a stroke in his sheltered flat in Cutbush House. When two wardens got no response from his door they walked away — leaving Mr Gelmini suffering for 18 hours. He subsequently died in hospital. The same official investigator found the circumstances "beyond belief".

These incidents were in addition to the death of Arthur Sharp, 86, from a fire in Herongate House in December 1995. Despite the coroner and a separate investigator making a huge series of recommendations, only five out of 28 were acted on.

Most worrying now, however, is housing chief Jennings's refusal to take immediate action to remedy the severely flawed alarm systems in Islington's 18 sheltered homes. The fire investigator, Garth Scotford, a former chief fire officer in Berkshire, described them as being like a set of fairy lights on a Christmas tree. "When one bulb fails, the whole string of lights goes out," he wrote.

Scotch Corner

LABOUR-run Inverclyde council, evidently awash with dosh, is paying consultants to revamp its education department.

One high-flyer benefiting from this is Joe Hogan, who gets £200-a-day to advise on matching colour schemes.

One of those who will benefit from his expert advice is one Rose Hogan, a senior officer in the department who just happens to be Joe Hogan's wife. Naturally she had no involvement in hiring her husband, however.

Meanwhile, it's not only in North Lanarkshire council where councillors have been paying their pals for doing nothing. A trawl through the books at **East Ayrshire**, where £2m recently went missing from the direct works department, has unearthed a £100,000 black hole in the budget for paying park maintenance workers.

A few winters ago the parks department had work for 18 people but somehow found wage packets for 35. Then there was the bonus system designed to help workers during cold winter months (it was paid all year round). And when the grass needed cutting all the parks men were off on holiday (on full pay, *natch*).

These scams lasted for two years despite warnings from the finance director that they should stop. So who can be held to account? Er, nobody. Cumnock & Doon Valley council has been abolished and swallowed by East Ayrshire.

And in **Renfrewshire** the council will have to improve the way it safeguards its finances after uncovering a remarkable catalogue of irregularities a t a council-run unemployed workers centre — the domain of sole employee, Liz Proctor.

A council report accuses Proctor, a member of the local Labour party, of misappropriating £16,000 from the national lottery charities board and £8,000 from the council. It also accuses her of paying lottery grants into her own personal bank account, of fabricating invoices and receipts and getting management committee members to sign blank cheques she later made out to herself.

Proctor admits faking invoices and asking management committee members to sign the blank cheques. She insists though the lottery money was only paid into her account to keep it separate from other money. The centre has since closed and Inspector McKnacker is investigating.

An Educashun Fairy Story

ONCE upon a time, in the lovely town of Stockton-on-Tees, there were two schools, Newtown Juniors and Newtown Infants, 500 yards apart.

Newtown Juniors was of trendy, modern design: open-plan inside, surrounded by open playing fields and with no caretaker's house. It had fierce metal spikes around the roof to keep the vandals off — and the money spent on repairing broken windows was a constant drain on the budget. It was not a happy school.

Newtown Infants was built on traditional lines. It had a wall around it and a caretaker's house in the grounds. Inside it had separate rooms connected by corridors. It was a much-loved school.

One day some nice men and women from Ofsted came to look at the two schools. In their reports they said the junior school had failed! It had failed so badly, in fact, the headmaster resigned. When they reported on the infants school, however, they said it had passed with flying colours. Even the caretaker's extra little touches about the school came in for special praise for helping make it a happy place for pupils and staff.

Then Stockton council came along and said: "We've got to save some money. We've got a brilliant idea — we're going to close both the schools and amalgamate them on the junior school site!"

"But that's not fair!" cried pupils and parents.

"It's all in the children's interests!" said councillors.

MORAL: Fairy stories in Rotten Boroughs like Stockton don't always have happy endings.

Pseuds Corner

The stories accumulated in Jeanette Winterson's new collection, *The World and Other Places*, are patchy; the mad flights of fancy often trapped in heavy fog and unable to land. Forgive her though the self-indulgent posturing, and enjoy the fantastical visual splendour of her fairytale backdrops, as she reads extracts today. Expect new developments in the field of animal painting inspired by her 13 tortoises with decorated shells, depicting, when lined up correctly, a moving and educational tableau of the Last Supper.

JUDITH PALMER
The Independent Recommends

Was he (Stuart Proffitt) surprised at the fuss that was made of his departure? "I was amazed." Did he imagine then that he would simply drift out? "I can't," he whispered. "I can't. I am sorry. I just can't." Long silence. "I was asked to appear on television and give interviews all over the world and I refused it all." What has he learned by the experience? Outside an ice-cream van played a version of the theme from The Third Man.

SABINE DURRANT
Guardian

That's how Dartmouth Park is: it draws you in, like a figure in an Italo Calvino story, or an exemplar of Vico's theory of circularity, forever wondering whether to turn left or right at the end of Laurier Road, forever circling back on yourself.

Guardian "Space" section

Steve Reinke: *Andy* (Canada. 1997, 9 Min)

Andy is a combination of a documentary portrait and an amateur porn movie. As Andy masturbates in his beautiful apartment, he describes, in voice-over, the process of and rationale for his decorating choices. A excercise *(sic)* in lifestyle anthropology.

London Electronics Arts video catalogue

Dear _____

Create competitive advantage for your organisation through human resource processes.

If you want to create such people processes, you will need specific personal competencies including strong "futuring skills" (such as awareness of the megatrends that are shaping the future and visioning) and change management skills.

Letter advertising London Business School *Human Resource Strategy in Transforming Organisations* programme

The Flat race season is like a clever lover. It always knows what you want next, far better than you yourself do, and by anticipating your desires and attuning itself with subtlety to their rhythms, so it keeps them ever satisfied.

It knows, for example, that after the emotional

exertions of Epsom, what you really want is a frivolous flirtation with Royal Ascot. Similarly it knows that after the monumental midsummer climax of last Saturday's King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Diamond Stakes, you want nothing so much as a long, laid-back drag on horse racing's equivalent of a post-coital cigarette.

LAURA THOMPSON
Guardian

On a recent visit to Bosnia, I saw some harrowing sights but experienced nothing as personally disagreeable as the piped extracts from *Lakmé* at the airport, and Schubert's *Rosamunde* played interminably in the aircraft awaiting take-off.

GEOFFREY WHEATCROFT
Prospect

CONTRIBUTORS: Anon, R. Taylor, Fiona Campbell-Howes, Y.A., Anon, Rupert Price, Anon.

£10 paid for entries

Letters

Shayler's lament?

Sir,

What a striking coincidence that as David Shayler threatens to blow the whistle on the nefarious deeds of the security services the lovely Patricia Hewitt should join the treasury. The silver-spooned Ms Hewitt's selfless rise to the pinnacle of New Labour dates back to her success in inveigling herself into the post of general secretary of NCCL, now Liberty. That sudden vacancy was created by my own demise when, in the wake of the council's involvement with special branch informant Kenneth Lennon, I was abruptly axed.

The NCCL gave international exposure to the incompetence of the security services, who exposed Lennon's role as an informer on the IRA and thus precipitated his murder. None of this could have had any influence on what followed when, in an executive committee motion moved by Harriet Harperson's dimmer half, the worker's friend Jack Dromey, I was unceremoniously heaved from office, NCCL thrown into chaos and the security services left to slip back into the shadows.

I do hope Shayler and his buddies can now confirm that no dirty tricks were involved.

MARTIN LONEY,

Ontario, Canada.

Hair, hair

Sir,

For once the EYE *is right on beards. David Shayler's beard is clearly false and for that reason the Beard Liberation Front will give him unconditional but critical support in his battle with the security services. I trust that the* EYE *will now join the campaign for legislation to outlaw the wearing of false beards in public as an outrage to public decency.*

Regards,
KEITH FLETT,

General Secretary, Beard Liberation Front, London N17.

Quackers about a canard...

Sir,

Dr Eamonn O'Dwyer (Letters, 956), an EU administrator in the Agricultural Secretariat, describes Mr Edward Spalton's assertion that "good quality bone meal was regarded as a wholesome feed ingredient which has been used for 60 years" as a "canard". Surely the EU should be able to tell their duck from their canard.

Watson and More's SCIENCE AND PRACTICE OF BRITISH FARMING *1941, recommends for dairy feeding "sterilised steamed bone flour". There is no implication 58 years ago that this was some trendy innovation. Spalton is right, who is the canard?*

Yours sincerely,
SIMON MULHOLLAND,

Brightlingsea, Essex.

Sir,

*If Dr Eamonn O'Dwyer can find no information to support Mr Edward Spalton's case (*EYE *956) he has obviously been looking in the wrong place. The standard text-book Froam's* ELEMENTS OF AGRICULTURE *(1st edn. 1892 and revised many times since) recommends meat and bone meal as a valuable source of protein in animal feeds, as also does McConnell's* AGRICULTURAL NOTEBOOK *(1958) quote... "Thus meat and bone meal is good for growing and milking animals. These are safe and palatable foods and may often be cheaper per unit of protein than alternative sources."*

Yours faithfully,
G.R. SALMON,

Sudbury, Derby.

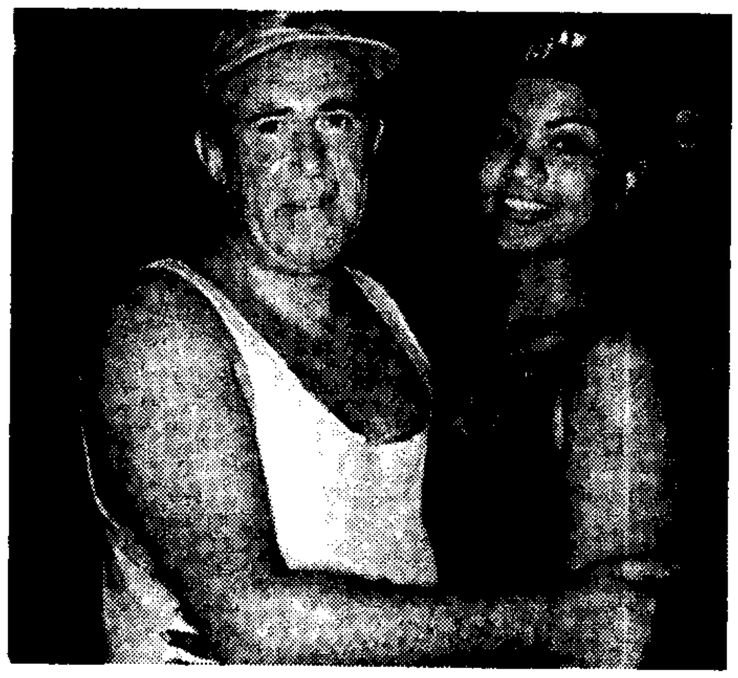


Photo opportunity

Sir,

Fans of the popular Radio 4 docu-soap THE ARCHERS *have recently been shocked to learn that Ambridge GP Dr Richard "Killer" Locke has left his live-in partner of three years, Borchester solicitor Ms Usha Gupta, for wealthy widow Mrs Shula Hebden. I understand that you have in your possession a photograph of Dr Locke and Ms Gupta celebrating his acquittal by the GMC on charges of professional misconduct arising from the suspicious death of an elderly widow. Might you by any chance consider printing the photograph to remind listeners of happier times?*

Yours faithfully,
MRS BRENDA SELWYN,

Bath, Somerset.

United?

Sir,

*Regarding Alex King's letter "Total Balls" (*EYE *956). I too must confess my ignorance of "the greatest game in the world". What is it?*

A.J. WELTON,

St Albans, Herts.

Electric shock

Sir,

*I welcome your articles (*EYE *949 and 956) on the disgraceful behaviour of National Grid and National Power in 1993 in claiming and keeping £62m and £377m respectively of pensioners' money. However, the reader may think that only the privatised companies in the electricity supply industry were guilty of such avarice. Not so. Nuclear Electric, in 1993 still a government owned nationalised company, used £16.8m of the declared pension fund surplus to improve benefits but pocketed £70m for the company offers. Still, in a way, we pensioners were lucky it was only £70m. The then Nuclear Electric personnel director, and who was also chairman of the pension fund trustees, was quoted as saying: "It would be tempting to use every single penny of the pension surplus to help the company's position."* (INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY, *23 January 1994).*

The pensions ombudsman has formally accepted for investigation my complaint against Nuclear Electric but that investigation is on hold pending the high court appeal by the pensioners of National Grid and National Power.

Yours sincerely,
ALED R. PUGH,

Uley, Glos.

Good question

Sir,

Why is Piloti such an arse? The image created by his crusty column, which may be intentional, is of one of those miserable old sods who whinge about everything new just to be obnoxious.

His latest comment about all polytechnics being second-rate is just daft. Naturally, I went to a polytechnic before they started "dumbing down" by using the title of the real second-rate institutions — the universities. I received a first-class education, one which didn't involve telling Ionic from my Doric columns but which did allow me to get a job when I left college. Far better than the generally pointless degrees offered by old universities — at my greater expense — which do have the advantage of allowing people to walk into jobs through name-dropping but which generally don't teach them how to do those jobs.

Love the magazine: will keep buying; not offended; keep trying.

Regards,
ANDY CRICK,

London SW11.

Lookalike

Powers

Branson

Sir,

I recently came across this photograph of the great British entrepreneur, Richard Branson. Or is it? There seems to be an uncanny resemblance to the sixties super spy 'Austin Powers, International Man of Mystery'. Can they be one and the same? I think we should be told.

Yours,
NORMAN FERGUSON,

Glasgow.

Demolition job

Sir,

Nicholas Paul's support for the demolition of Pimlico school was not due to some improper pressure from Jack Straw, he tells us ("Paul's Letter", EYE *956) but was based "on a careful assessment of all the options presented by all of the interested groups". Since Nick until very recently agreed with the near unanimous view of parents and staff that the only rational option was repair not demolition, one wonders what "interested group" persuaded him otherwise.*

Yours sincerely,
M.S. BALL,

Chair, Pimlico School Association.

LUVVIES

"I see my body as a very transient thing. I am very rubber, very changeable, and I have looked very different in all my movies. My body and face can be twisted into something that looks iconoclastically pre-Raphaelite in one movie, and very cheap, ugly and down-trodden in another."

UMA THURMAN
Birmingham Post *(Submitted by C Baker)*

"Becky threatened to kill me if I said this, but after reading the script I looked to the ceiling and said, 'I'd like to thank the members of the Academy'. I knew the role could bring me exactly what I want: an Oscar nomination. Actors have such rejection that moments of acceptance are delicious. If people call me 'Mr Fonda' I say, `He died in 1982. When I win one of those little gold puppies you can call me Mr Fonda. Right now, I'm just Peter, and I'm proud'."

PETER FONDA
Radio Times

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

I-SPY

Wimbledon
Funeral Services
are re-locating
Please telephone
Mr R Bury
0181-947 8099
(24 hour service)

Reganomics lesson

Sir,

Simon Regan's mother wrote to me about a year ago. She apologised for her son and reflected that "he was once a good journalist". I admire her, and she's known Regan longer than me, so I take her word for it. However, when I first met Regan he struck me as hopeless and a drunkard. He seems to have gone downhill since.

The background to SPIKED*'s relationship with Mohamed Al Fayed is as follows: I took out a subscription to Regan's rag* SCALLYWAG *when it was sued by John Major. Regan called me and invited me to an expensive lunch with his half brother Angus James and an associate. I was interested in the idea of a radical magazine not least because you lot have become so establishment.*

I came to the conclusion that I wanted nothing to do with Regan but I was interested in the plans laid out by Angus James for a more serious magazine than SCALLYWAG *which would attack* PRIVATE EYE*'s readership head-on by covering stories in greater depth. Angus produced some plausible and well thought through business plans. I made it a condition of my help that Simon Regan was not involved.*

I also approached Mohamed Al Fayed for assistance; his expressed interest in PUNCH *made him an obvious choice. He met Angus and was attracted by his courage. Angus was impressed by Mohamed and published a number of stories associated with Mohamed. Mohamed called me to say that* SPIKED *should be independent, so would I ask Angus to stop the blanket coverage and only write about him and his causes strictly as they merited coverage.*

I also introduced Angus to some good "name" journalists who volunteered to write for SPIKED *for no pay — you know, the sort of thing you used to ask journalists to do before you became millionaires.*

I discovered, quite quickly, that Angus's undoubted courage and his enthusiasm were diluted by his recreational appetites. However, from a very poor beginning, and influenced by some good journalists, SPIKED *began to improve and there were parts of one or two editions which began to look like the product which Angus had conjured up in his business plans.*

Unfortunately, the induced chaos in which Angus lived, together with the fact that he seemed to be supporting most of his family (including his girlfriend and Regan) out of the company, caused him cash difficulties.

I am sorry to say that he lied to me about going to Cyprus, saying that he was working on a story about Azil Nadir when in fact he was seeking finance. I had made it clear to him that I could give no help of any kind to any venture with which Azil Nadir was involved.

Using magazine money he took his girlfriend, another journalist and another woman to Cyprus where, on the way home, driving to the airport, they crashed in their hired car. Angus was killed.

People I know who also knew Angus remember him fondly, mostly for his courage. Sadly, he was too strongly under the influence of his half-brother, Regan.

Yours sincerely,
BRIAN BASHAM,

London NW3.

Lookalike

Mr Sex

Mr No Sex

Sir,

Is it just poetic fancy, or is there more than a passing resemblance between that unworldly Catholic poet Gerald Manley Hopkins and the ubiquitous Angus Deayton?

Are TV's Mr Sex and poetry's Mr Celibacy by any chance related? I think we should be told.

Yours,
TIM BREARLEY,

London W1.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

Rebecca Carr: *Have you ever fallen over?*
Rollerskating Pensioner: *Yes.*
Rebecca Carr: *What happened?*
Rollerskater: *Well, I fell over.*
Radio 4
(D. Clifford)

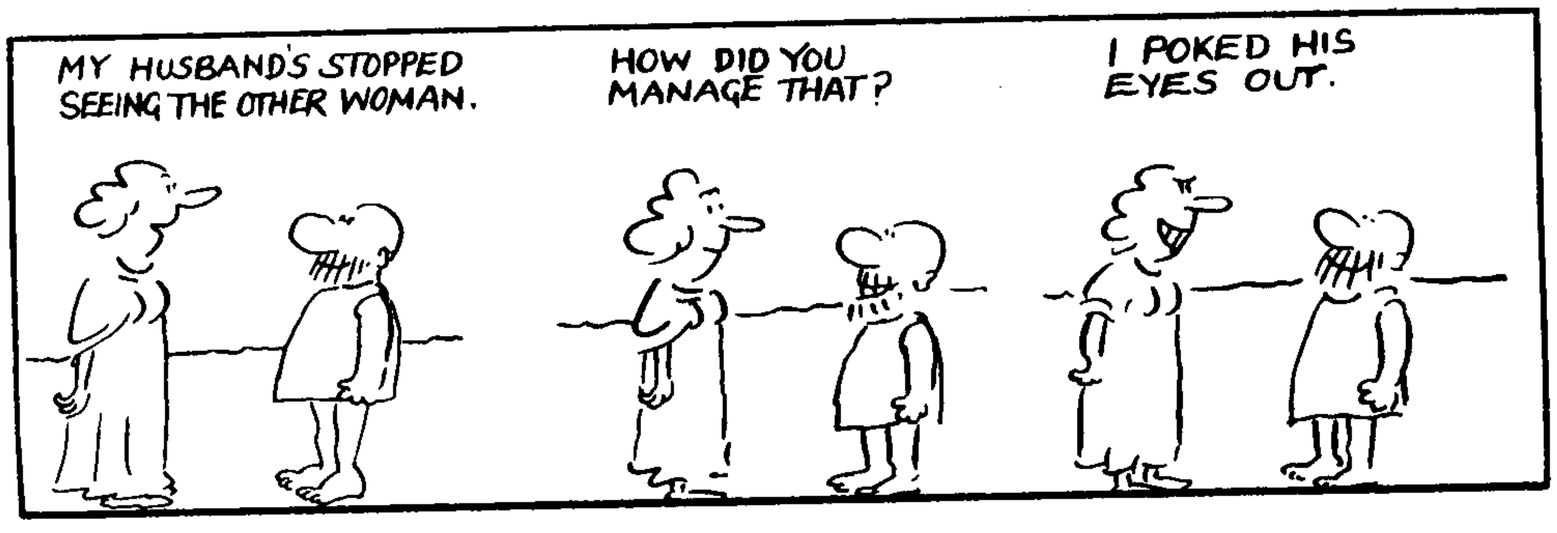
"It won't be the first time this season that Michael Owen will be tripped."
Channel 5
(Phil Brown)

"The important thing is that he shook hands with us over the phone."
ALAN BALL, BBC
(Arthur Lord)

"To stay in, you've got to not get out."
GEOFF BOYCOTT, BBC2
(Helena Minton)

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN



Iron awe

Sir,

Methinks N.J. Sutton's (Letters 955) handwriting is as pisspoor as his sense of humour, as the public house in question is the "Iron" Horse, not "Flying". I must say that I find it strange that one who is offended so easily is still able to watch (Team) England matches in the aforementioned Iron, because I certainly can't.

Amongst his fellow "gutees" are three wankers who regularly serenade the pub with the cheeky refrain of "No Surrender to the IRA" (the sovereignty of mid-Bucks being crucial to the Stormont agreement) and whose mates beat someone up for the heinous crimes of being a) French and b) uninterested in football a whole month prior to France 98. Your organ is all the more potent for his passing.

Yours faithfully,
WILLIAM WHITE,

(Also of Amersham, about 2 minutes walk from t'Iron)

Gollum city

Sir,

At last it makes sense. Now I have realised who Tolkien based that charming character Gollum on. See if it is clear to you.

Check in THE TWO TOWERS *in Chapter 3 and about 6 pages in (happens to be page 666 in my book — really). You will find the following passage:*

"No!" said Frodo. "But do not wander from your road. What of the third turning?"

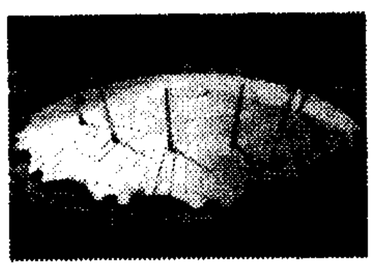
"O yes, O yes, there is a third way," said Gollum. "That is the road to the left."

Tolkien certainly used "left" instead of "centre" to avoid direct comparison and subsequent litigation. The character of Gollum is a dead giveaway in any case: slimy, gangrel, flesh-eating, devious, not to mention untrustworthy. And there is the matter of the obsession with an artefact of great contention… Ring/Dome, Dome/Ring. Need I say more?

MIKE KINNEAR,

West Sussex.

Lookalike



Trap

Dome

Sir,

I couldn't help noticing the resemblance between the enormous edifice currently being erected in Greenwich and the Slug and Snail Trap featured in a freebie catalogue that fell out of my TV listings magazine. At last the problem of what to put in the dome is solved — never mind giant hermaphrodites, surfball and Serious Play zones — Mandelson can simply "fill it with beer, or cabbage in soapy water".

Yours,
AIDEN GALLOWAY,

Portlogan, Dumfries & Galloway.

Anyone for surfball?

Sir,

I have been asked to write a coaching manual for "Surfball, the sport of the 21st century," which Peter Mandelson promised last December as an attraction of the Millennium Dome.

I would be extremely grateful if any of your readers could assist me by providing the correct name of the sport, its rules, equipment and playing conditions, and the results of any matches played so far.

Yours sincerely,
RICHARD HELLER,

London SW9.

NOOKS and CORNERS

OLD, interesting and beautiful churches are a nuisance. They always have been and will continue to be. And no historic buildings are more tiresome to the Church of England than the 40-odd places of worship which have survived against the odds in the City of London.

Never mind that those of them designed by Sir Christopher Wren — the only architect most Englishmen had ever heard of before the exciting advent of My Lord Rogers of Riverdance — constitute a unique group of artistic creations unparalleled in Europe; few of them have proper congregations, many of them occupy valuable sites and all of them cost money which could be better spent elsewhere.

So, in the 19th century Bishops Blomfield and Tait closed quite a few and sold the sites. But the great realist was Bishop Winnington-Ingram who, in 1919, proposed destroying 19 churches by Wren, Hawksmoor and others. But, as Robert Byron said, that was too much even for a nation of shopkeepers, and the odious Winnington-Ingram managed only to destroy one Wren church before the Luftwaffe arrived to do the work for him.

The trouble with wars, though, is that they make people sentimental; and with war damage money available, the diocese of London was obliged to rebuild almost all the damaged churches. A great lost opportunity. So the problem remained and successive attempts were made to hive off or otherwise dispose of as many City churches as possible — culminating in the Templeman report of 1994, which recommended that 27 churches were to be "reserved" and made into bars or casinos, so that only a dozen needed to be kept as places of worship.

Fortunately the Templeman Report seems to have been shelved. This is because we have a new Bishop of London in Richard Chartres and — unusually — he seems to be a good thing. "The City churches are not a problem," he says. "Nor are they in peril. What they are is a marvellous opportunity for the church." Yes. And it obviously makes sense to try to find compatible new or additional uses for many of these buildings, especially as they are surrounded by wealthy and possibly sympathetic institutions.

So last year Bishop Chartres set up the City Churches Development Group to review how the churches are or might be used, and it seems reasonable that some might become art galleries or offices (some already are) or (no doubt smart) restaurants. But... oh dear. The group has worked up secret proposals to turn St Mary Abchurch into a Wren study and exhibition centre.

Isn't there anybody with an eye and a brain who might be consulted by the diocese of London? The point is that there are plenty of City churches which were so vulgarly "restored" after the second world war — largely owing to a fatuous misinterpretation of the ideas of William Morris — they are but travesties, bearing little authentic resemblance to the original work of Wren, and so could and should find alternative uses. You could make St Mary-le-Bow, say, into a burger bar and I would not raise a scintilla of protest.

But St Mary Abchurch is another matter. Tucked away off Cannon Street, it is near to heaven, and near to perfection. Carefully repaired after damage in the Blitz, it retains almost all its original woodwork — pews, pulpit, communion table and reredos, gallery and organ — and its musty, magic interior powerfully conveys what such places were like in Wren's day. St Mary Abchurch should be sacrosanct: it is a *church*, and a most beautiful one; it is precious, and should be preserved intact if it really cannot ever be used again as a place of worship. And the same is true of the tiny handful of City churches which are authentic, like St Margaret Lothbury and St Martin Ludgate.

But the diocese of London has, in truth, never much cared for these very special creations by one of the most distinguished and sympathetic minds in English history. After all, look what has happened to that famous essay in spatial integration and ambiguity, that highly intellectual design by Wren which was a columniated try-out for placing a dome over a Latin cross — St Stephen Walbrook. As it is the best documented of all City churches, it would have been possible to restore its original appearance exactly. Instead, despite strenuous protests, My Lord Palumbo was allowed to bugger up the interior with his ridiculous circular "ripe camembert" sacrificial altar produced by Henry Moore, and the accompanying horrible seating (*Eyes passim*).

Poor St Mary Abchurch. Go and see it now before it is taken screaming into the bright Careyite future.

'Piloti'

FRANKENSTEIN UPDATE

UNTIL recently biotech seed producer Monsanto's ad campaign promoting its genetically modified (GM) products has stuck to the advice of Burston Marsteller, specialists in crisis management (cf Bhopal, Exxon Valdez, Nigeria), closely. But all that is changing.

The biotech industry consulted Burston Marsteller last year. And the expert at "changing public perceptions" warned the industry that it had no chance of winning arguments over the issues. Instead it should promote "symbol's eliciting hope, satisfaction, caring, and self-esteem".

Thus lines promoting genetically modified goodies such as "Our biotech seeds have naturally occurring beneficial genes inserted" sound more like an ad for fancy herbal soap. Of course genes for cold resistance, say, are natural and beneficial to the Arctic flounder where they belong, but are less likely to be so in, say, strawberries.

Burston Marsteller also advised the Frankenstein companies to keep well away from the PR "killing fields" of health and environmental issues where they would be slaughtered; in particular it advised the industry not to push the "third world food supply" angle. Of course temptation has proved too much and Monsanto now claims its monstrous creations will feed the hungry.

This is odd: not only because every GM crop so far has had *lower* yields, but because Monsanto's plans for the developing countries have nothing to do with feeding anyone.

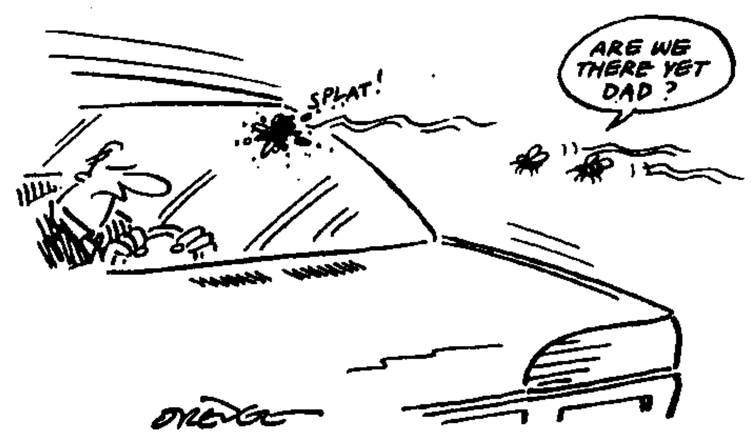
The giant scam developed with seed and feed merchant Cargill (see *Eye* 955) is to persuade farmers to buy its herbicide-resistant seeds to grow fodder crops, sell them the herbicide and then buy the crop to feed western beef and dairy cattle. The clever bit is that the crops will also have the notorious "Terminator" gene, so that the harvest seeds will be sterile. The growers cannot save seed as they usually do and will be tied to a vicious cycle of expensive inputs and cheap outputs.

Apparently this is all for their own good. "The centuries old practice of farmer saved seed is really a gross disadvantage to third world farmers, who inadvertently become locked into obsolete varieties," says the Terminator gene company. Really? Sadly, scientists in the countries concerned don't seem to appreciate Monsanto's benevolence.

"We will not allow the Terminator to enter this country," said the director-general of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research. Meanwhile 24 African delegates at a UN commission, all agriculture and environment experts, issued a statement — supported by others including Action Aid and Christian Aid — demolishing Monsanto's arguments about the benefits. "It will destroy the diversity, the local knowledge, and the sustainable agricultural systems that our farms have developed for millennia and it will thus undermine our capacity to feed ourselves."

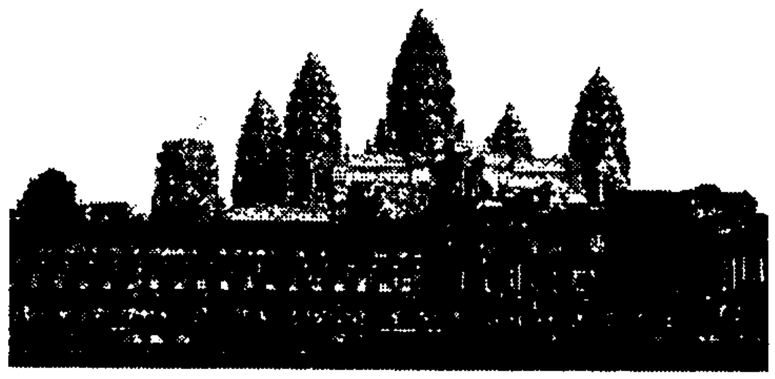
Monsanto is also having difficulty with its ironically-named Let The Harvest Begin campaign, now months overdue. The idea was to sign up African leaders who would endorse Monsanto's vision, but strangely all the early signatories are "former" notables — presumably targeted because they were not sure where their next Mercedes was coming from.

'Gumboot'



Letter from **Phnom Penh**

from Our Own Correspondent



CAMBODIA has just captured its first live Khmer Rouge bogeyman, who will soon be given a show trial and probably 20 years' jail for murdering three foreign backpackers in 1994. Strange, given that many chiefs of Pol Pot's 1975-79 regime — the one that killed hundreds of thousands — are unjudged, free, powerful and have access to journalists (if not jurors).

Nuon Paet, arrested six days after a general election, is a sacrificial sop by the election winner, Hun Sen, to foreign donors who paid more than $22m (mainly European and Japanese taxpayers' money) to his election. Even the families of the three murdered men believe Paet is a "thank you" from Hun Sen to his fawning new international friends.

The three backpackers were in fact captured by a KR commander working under Paet, and Paet's immediate boss is now a three-star general in the government army. But they both defected long ago, got amnesties and are untouchable.

Paet is said to have killed Briton Mark Slater, Frenchman Jean-Michael Braquet and Australian David Wilson in July 1994. He escaped and later quietly joined Ieng Sary, one of Pol Pot's old lieutenants, who had already been given amnesty by Hun Sen and freed to run his old KR stomping ground as an autonomous zone.

Everyone knew where Paet was. The French, Australian and British ambassadors privately asked Hun Sen again last month to arrest him. "Can't do that now," he replied. "It could cause chaos before the election." The three diplomats left assured of Paet's head soon after the election — if Hun Sen won.

Hun Sen, 47, a former KR himself, helped invading Vietnamese forces topple Pol Pot in 1979. He rose to lead the Hanoi-installed regime in 1985 and, bar an awkward power-sharing arrangement with Prince Norodom Ranariddh from 1993-97, he's been in charge since but without full international recognition.

Hun Sen finally ousted Ranariddh in a coup last year after having used his financial, judicial, military and executive power to neuter the prince. Last month he beat Ranariddh at the polls. Soon international legitimacy will finally be his; ironically, almost certainly in another coalition with Ranariddh's party, the nearest losers.

Was it a fair election? Well, the foreigners who paid for it think so — especially France and Britain (that they had closure of an embarrassing triple murder at their fingertips is a coincidence), and ASEAN, which has long wanted Cambodia in a united 10-state bloc.

Those beaten at the polls say they've had dozens of activists murdered in the past year and that Hun Sen has systematically intimidated people and manipulated the entire electoral process. Much is cant, but millions of voters were signed up to Hun Sen's CPP party before the vote, some being asked, for instance, to drink from a glass of water with a bullet at the bottom. The message: if you don't vote CPP the bullet will follow.

The Joint International Observation Group (JIOG) which gave the definitive foreign judgement of the election, quashed the first report done by its own 500 foreign observers — who were gagged from talking to the press — because it was "too political and based too much on human rights". Problems presumably that JIOG didn't want to hear. JIOG said the election was "free, fair and credible" less than 36 hours after polling had closed, before votes had been counted and before allegations of fraud became so serious.

So Hun Sen will get the aid tap turned back on, Cambodia's UN seat back and be invited into ASEAN. There may even be a few juicy new development projects for European and Australian companies, you never know. There is the small matter of whether Hun Sen will turn out to be the benevolent, open democrat some diplomats are now selling him as being. But, if not, well... that's not really the international community's fault, is it?

FUNNY OLD WORLD

"Ladies, do you want to be safe from assault?" Simon Ayasanjaya asked the crowd who had gathered to watch a demonstration of his latest product in a department store in Jakarta. "Of course you do. So buy one of my anti-rape corsets, made from genuine imitation cotton and fully tested rubber, with a luxury combination lock made in Taiwan."

Since Indonesia's ethnic riots in May, when hundreds of Chinese women were the victims of gang rapes, sales of Ayasanjaya's corset have been soaring among the Chinese community. "It is a modern version of the Victorian chastity belt, and there are three sizes to choose from. Forced entry — front or back — is impossible once the lock is snapped shut. The corset is easy to wash, practical, and hygienic, and comes in various styles. Our best-selling style is the diamond model, which costs only 100,000 rupiah (plus delivery), and can also protect against knife attacks, though unfortunately not bullets.

"The only problem we have had is when ladies put them on, and then

forget the combination. I warn all customers that normal toilet activities are quite impossible when the corset is worn, and it can only be removed with the help of oxy-acetylene equipment. The company cannot accept liability for the consequences, so I advise you to choose a number that is easy to remember. Order three items or more, and we will also send you a free posing pouch for your man." *(New Straits Times, 20/7/98. Spotter: Douglas Walker)*

—o—

"When Larry 'The Last Showman' Dulhunty asked for a volunteer, I was up on the stage in a flash," said Lucas Dow from his hospital bed in Mt Isa Hospital, Queensland.

Dow, a twenty-two-year-old student from Moranbah, recalled what had happened during Dulhunty's perfor-mance. "First, he told me to stand motionless while he demonstrated his whip-cracking skills. I did, and he whipped me across the face, this red weal here. When I complained, he just laughed and said I must have moved, but I hadn't. Well, not until he whipped me anyway. But the audience were loving it, so when he ordered me to hold a cigarette in my outstretched hand while he demonstrated his trick shooting, I reluctantly did as he said. Seconds later, he shot me clean through the palm.

"At this point, I told him I'd had enough and tried to go back to my seat. But the audience were cheering, so I agreed to lie on the floor, while he demonstrated his horsemanship with some trick jumping over my body. The first time he jumped, one of his horse's hooves perforated my abdomen, and when it came back I got a kick to the head. After that, I don't remember much until I woke up in here."

A police spokesman later confirmed that Dulhunty, seventy-four, was a retired accountant with no rodeo experience whatsoever. *(Brisbane Courier Mail, 1/7/98. Spotter: Norm Reynolds)*

—o—

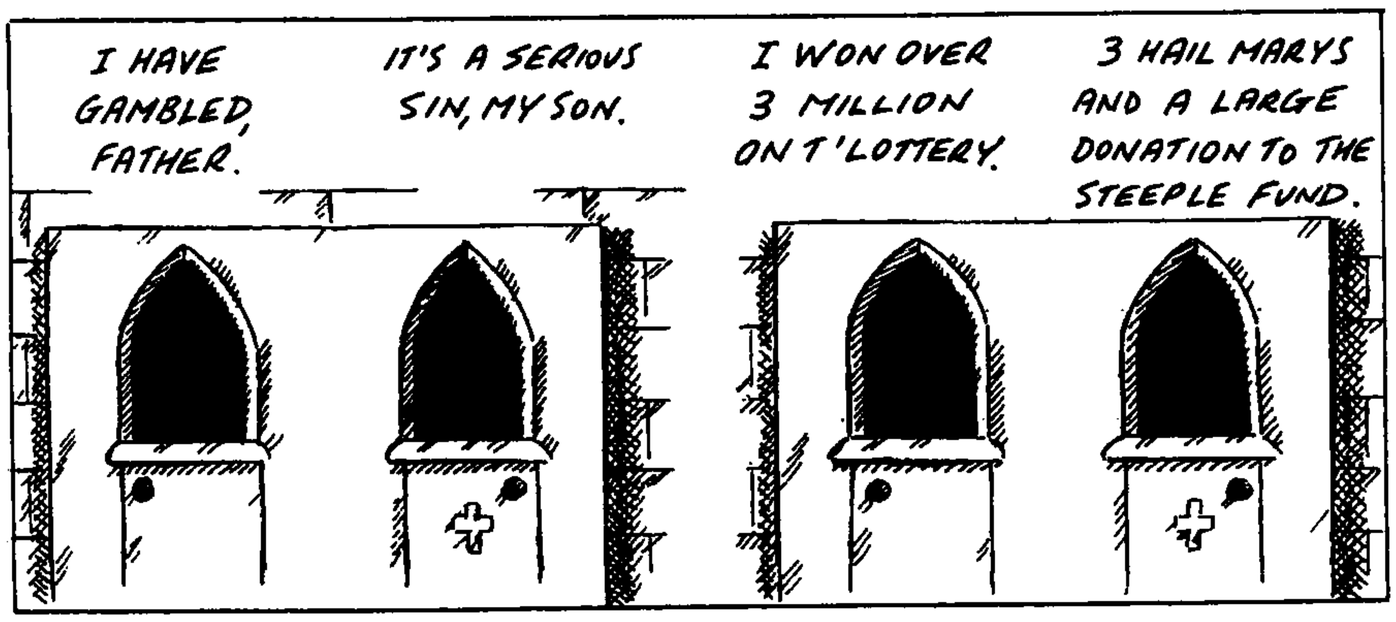
"You know, there's just something about a pumpkin," said John Terrence McCarter, after his late-night arrest in the Sanderson pumpkin patch in Dixon, Illinois. "You know, they're soft and squishy inside, it was dark, and there was no one around."

Arresting Officer Brenda Taylor confirmed that McCarter, twenty-seven, had been charged with lewd and lascivious behaviour and public indecency. "It was an unusual situation, that's for sure. When I approached him and pointed out that he was having sexual intercourse with a pumpkin, he looked up at me and said 'A pumpkin? Damn... is it midnight already? I suppose now you're gonna ask me to come quietly?' I think he was hoping to make me laugh, and be let off. But we locked the filthy little pervert up instead." (Illinois Sentinel, July 1998. Spotter: Sean Donnellan)

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

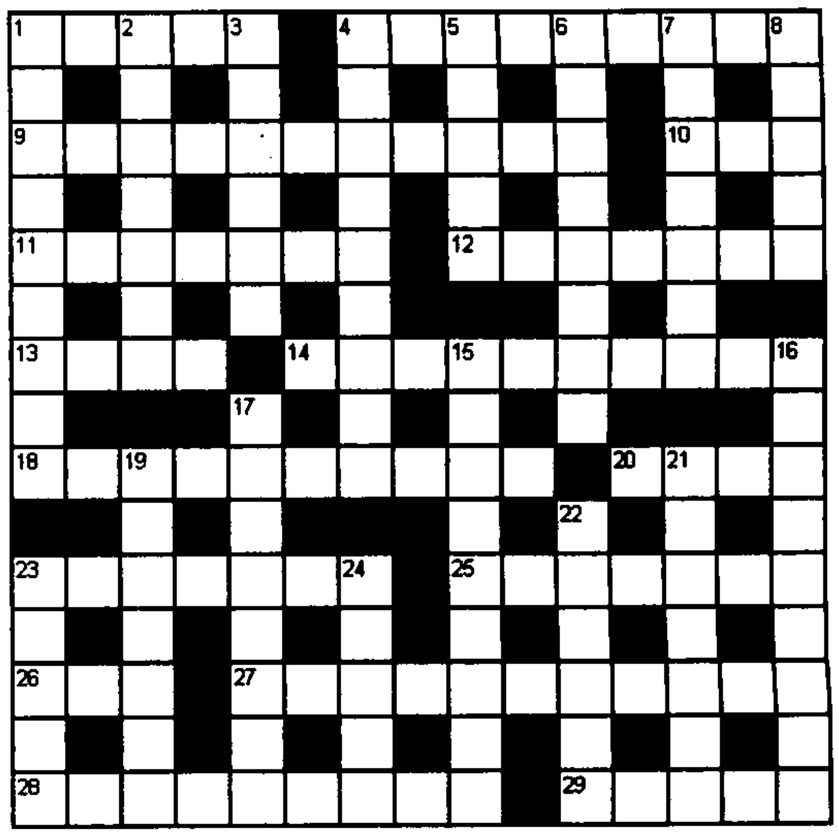
The Lottery Winners

TURNER


I HAVE GAMBLED, FATHER.
IT'S A SERIOUS SIN, MY SON.
I WON OVER 3 MILLION ON T'LOTTERY.
3 HAIL MARYS AND A LARGE DONATION TO THE STEEPLE FUND.

EYE CROSSWORD 112

by Cyclops — *£100 prize*



ACROSS

1 Piles around inside of bum, Blossom? (5)
4 USSR-cloned pointless, stupid arsehole (9)
9/3 Though hardly a progressive period for Orangemen? (3,8,6)
10 Suppress crack (3)
11 Sugar company's in fix (7)
12 Jack needs to shag a great many (7)
13 Good getting into sot's filthy habit (4)
14 TWA crap was broadcast by one-time co-operating nations (6,4)
18 Grand old sort who, so it goes, had a hell of a lot of men (4,2,4)
20 William's no leader, getting the sweats (4)
23/4dn. Cook some fowl and do a Brenda — official (7,9)
25 Pisspoor type, clean bowled, perhaps? (7)
26/2 Boateng, no leader, must upset the leader (3,3-4)
27 Fighting men having members with most of foreskin caught inside (5,6)
28 Labour's bound to produce an exploitative working situation (9)
29 Revolutionaries' abrupt movements (5)

DOWN

1 Did a Goldsmith, setting up Eastern Time in digital form (9)
2 (see 26)
3 (see 9)
4 (see 23ac.)
5 Work one, er, gives dope (5)
6 Late operator not giving a hoot? Yes and no (5,3)
7 Displayed by Brenda, "when one gets in a booze up" (7)
8 Not taxing Dawn? (5)
15 Made complete balls of shag with hack out of bed (7,2)
16 *Star*, see, it pissed about erudite papers (9)
17 Ruling quashed — no, damn it! (8)
19 In which the management provides backing for crap singers? (7)
21 Marx's great unconsummated love that hurt inside (7)
22 Brenda involved with Scot attendant (6)
23 Gets all steamed up and produces emission (5)
24 Woody girl from New York on speed (5)

£100 prize to first solution opened on 28.8.98. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 111

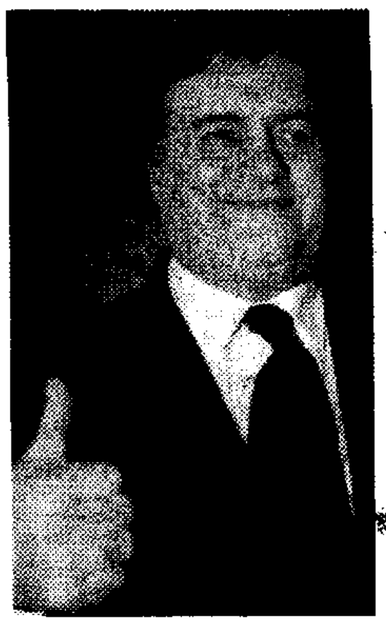
Winner: ANDY HOLTEN

ACROSS: 1 Blow job 5 Habitat 9 Order 10 Great Bear 11/13 Literary Review 13 (see 11) 15 Tit for tat 17 Skimp 18 Monet 19 Escapists 21 (see 2) 22 Starkers 25 Rampaging 26 Satie 28 Lynched 29 The Left.

DOWN: 1 Booklet 2/21/27 Old school tie 3 Juror 4 Big Brother 5 Heel 6 Butters up 7 The Big Issue 8 Throw up 12 Tutankhamen 14 Stick tight 16 Osteopath 18 Mistral 20 Suspect 23 Rosie 24 Tied 27 (see 2).

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)



From Mr Prescott of the Working Men's Club

How do, everyone!

Tony has very graciously asked me to keep an eye on things while he and Cherie are on holiday.

And if ever a man deserved a break it's our new vicar, who's worked his socks off to bring the parish up to scratch after years of neglect.

Mind you, it's not everyone's cup of tea to spend their holiday in Tuscany, being waited on hand and foot in some rich toff's palace. So far as Pauline and I are concerned, a bed and breakfast in Skegness is more than adequate for our holiday needs.

But thank goodness in the new St Albion's, where we're all part of the same team, there is no call for making these kind of unhelpful comparisons. If Tony and Cherie want to spend a lot of money on jaunting about the Continent staying in grand houses with titled folk, that's their business and nobody else's!

The point is that Tony has done a tremendous job, although I am sure he would be the first to admit (if he was here, and wasn't off sunning himself in foreign climes with his fancy friends!) that he hasn't done it on his own.

It's been a team effort, pulling the parish round, and nobody knows that better than I do, as the man Tony has always been able to rely on for a bit of down-to-earth common sense advice. Not all of us rely on focus groups and such like to know what we think.

And that is why, I am sure, when it was time for Tony to go on holiday in his so-called palazzo, it was me he chose to stand in for him as caretaker, to make sure the parish stays on an even keel.

There may be others who think they could have done the job just as well, but I would just like to leave you with this message:

As it says in the New Labour Bible, "And there was one disciple whom the Lord loved more than any. And his name was John." (Not Peter, please note!)

Take care
(and remember to leave your car at home!),

John (Prescott)

From the Churchwarden (and Acting Chairman of the PCC) P. Mandelson

Let me make one thing quite clear. While Tony is away, all major decisions affecting parish business are primarily my responsibility.

You may hear other people maintaining that they have been asked to play a supervisory role in the vicar's absence. But let there be no misunderstanding about this. If you have any doubts at all about who is in charge over the holiday period, I have got a letter in my office, signed personally by Tony before he went away, which makes it quite clear what his wishes are in this respect. If anyone wishes to see it, I can e-mail it to them direct. P.M.

HOBBY HORSE CORNER *by Mr Lairg*

If there's one thing that gets my goat in the modern age it's the way we're all expected to dress up in the fancy clothes of some bygone age when we go to church.

Don't get me wrong! Some old things are nice, which is why I have done out my office in nice old wallpaper with nice old pictures hanging on it. But let's keep things in proportion. Instead of wearing robes and vestments and all the rest of the flummery we associate with worship, why can't the choir wear t-shirts and trainers? The singing will sound just the same!

Over to you, Tony!
D. Lairg,
St Albion's Home
For Retired Gentlefolk.

Verses By A Local Poet

August is here
Some people call it "Black",
But be of good cheer and
never fear
Tony will soon be back.

R. Branson
Form 3a

Mrs Margaret Jay writes:

First of all my thanks to Tony for doing me the great honour of appointing me Matron of our old folks' home in succession to Mr Ivor Richard, who not before time has been asked to retire. I've certainly been very busy trying to clear up the mess he left behind!

I am sure we are all agreed that a lot of changes need to be made to how our retirement home is run, if we are going to be true to Tony's vision of "The Third Way". For a start, many of the residents are far too old. We need to attract a whole new generation of younger old people who will give the place a much needed shot in the arm!

But more importantly I intend to weed out all those residents who were only admitted because their parents had been there before.

Goodness me, as Tony would say, how can anyone defend in this day and age that kind of special treatment just because of who one's parents happened to be. It would be much better if in future our vicar was left to select all those people worthy of admission to the retirement home on the basis of whether they fit in with his way of doing things. The last thing we need in our "sunset home" is a bunch of crotchety troublemakers, always complaining about the management.

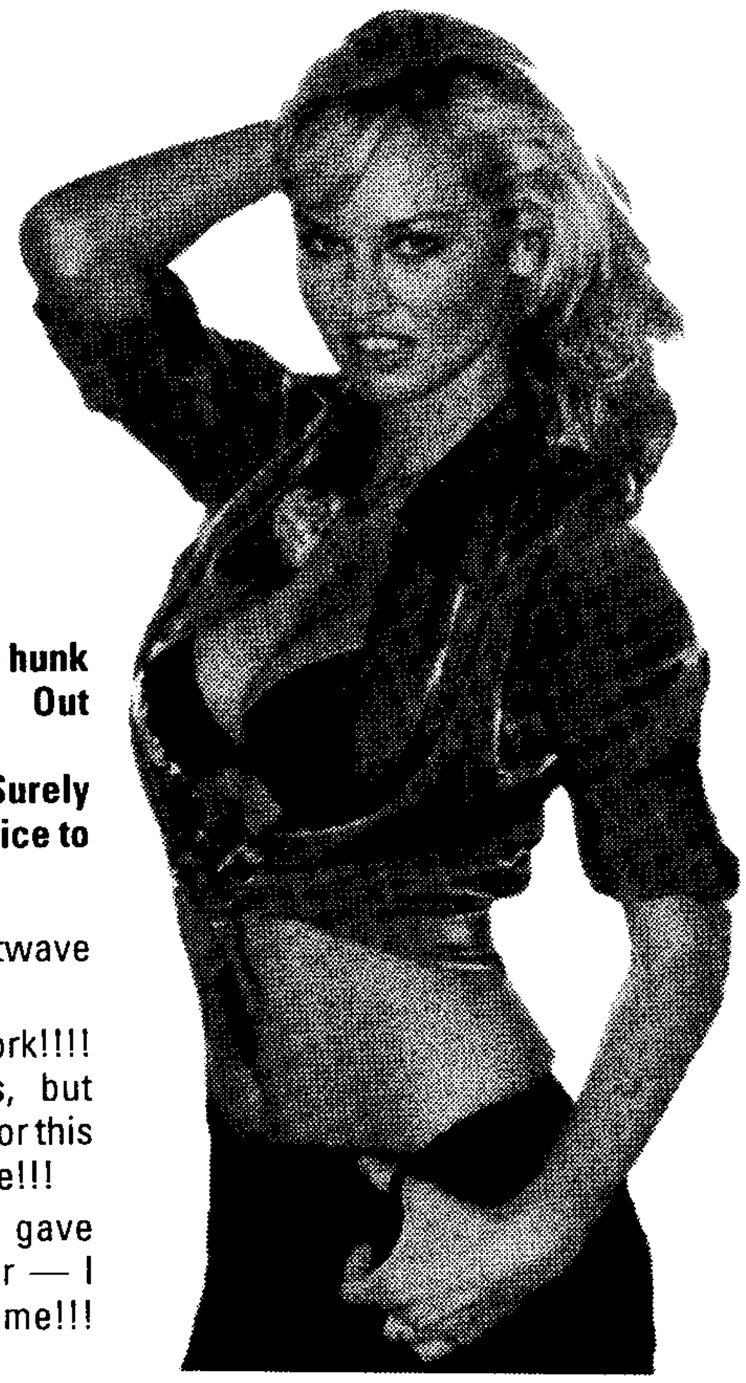
Mrs M. Jay, Matron.

A Postcard From The Vicar

Ciao Everyone!
Cherie and I wish you were here! There's certainly room enough for everyone - 438 to be precise!
See you next week!
Tony

GLENDA SLAGG

Fleet Street's Own Viagra



WHERE were YOU when you heard the news?? (About Di, stoopid!!)

It may be a year ago that it happened, but I will bet a year's salary that every single person in the world can put their hand on their heart and say "Yes, I can remember."

That's how much she meant to us all, this beautiful caring goddess-in-human-form who came to us all so briefly.

So, on Aug. 29 *(check date please)* **let us all stand in homage where we were a year ago and say a silent prayer for the People's Princess.**

HAVE we all gone stark staring mad!!?!

It's nearly a year now, but you can't open a paper or switch on the television without seeing HER face!?!?!

For Gawd's sake Mr Media Man!!?! Let her rest in peace!!?! We've all got to get on with our lives!!!!

HATS off to Paula Yates!?!?! Plucky Paula may not look like a spring chicken, but she's still got enough FRONT to get herself a randy young rooster to wake her up with a rousing cock-a-doodle-do in the morning (Geddit?!?!?!).

PAULA Yates!?!?! Doesn'tshe-makeyasick!?!?! Seems like only yesterday her live-in lover boy passed on in tragic circumstances!!! Yet here she is a-ruttin' and a-struttin', a-fuggin' and a-huggin' with some under-age hunk she met at the Drying Out Clinic!?!?!

Dry Out, did I say???? Surely Dry Up is Aunty Glenda's advice to cradle snatcher Paula!!?!?!

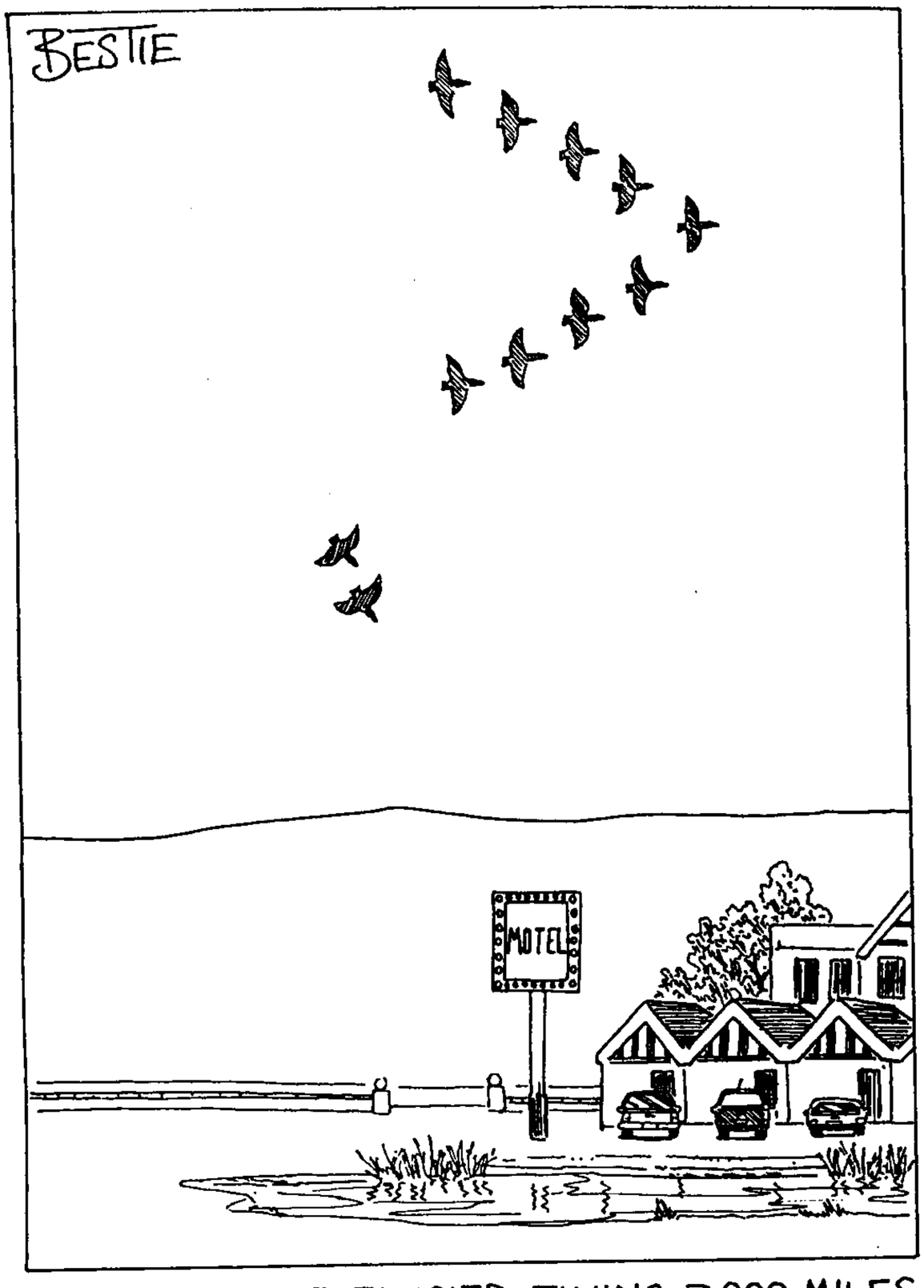
HERE they are, Glenda's Heatwave Heroes:

● **Bishop Spong** of New York!!!! He may support the gays, but there's a SPONG in my heart for this Dishy Bish from the Big Apple!!!

● **Arsene Wenger**!!?! He gave Arsenal the Double last year — I wouldn't mind the same!!! (Geddit?!?!?)

● **Professor Richard Dawkins**, Oxford's sexiest scientist!!?! Dishy Dick the Dork is right behind genetic engineering!?!?! Howsabout swopping a few genes round my place, lover boy!!?!?!

Byeeeee!!!!



NOT EVERYONE FANCIED FLYING 3,000 MILES TO MATE IN AN AFRICAN SWAMP

NEW OED STEALS HEADLINES

by Our Oxford Staff **Paul Merton and Chris Wadham**

THOUSANDS of new words are included in the new sensational Oxford English Dictionary that went on sale yesterday.

Making their appearance for the first time in the hallowed pages of the OED are:

hype /harp/ ➤**noun** exaggerated publicity drummed up by unscrupulous publishers, eg Oxford University Press.

dumbing down /dʌmming daʊn/ ➤**noun** deliberate debasement of formerly prestigious institutions, for example by insertion of such words as "Bonking" and "Shagger" into OED.

rip off /rip-ɑf/ ➤**noun** commercial enterprise providing poor quality for inflationary price, eg new OED. *(That's enough new words. Ed.)*

ROBIN COOK IN MADAME TUSSAUD'S SHOCK

Edinburgh '98

Your cut out and keep guide to this year's Festival highlights

COMEDY

St Magnus Linklater's Cathedral

Dead Cat For Dinner: Belfast stand-up Harry McTampax has reinvented himself for this 6-hour marathon monologue in which he pokes fun at the contents of his deep-freeze. Brilliant with hecklers, he once told a drunken lesbian to "fuck off". Unlucky not to have been shortlisted for last year's Perrier Worsthorne Award for Comedy.

ART

National Gallery of Scotland

The Vision of Jan Joop: haunting evocation of rural life in pre-war Belgium by recently rediscovered Walloon lensman Joop, celebrating his 104th birthday this year. In his foreword to the catalogue Joop explains that his 3000 pictures, taken with a box Brownie in 1928, were all shot on the same day, showing the same view of the same field. "After this," he continues, "I abandoned photography for my new career as a train driver in my native Bruges."

CABARET

Upstairs at McWong's Vegetarian Chinese Pizza House

Having A Ball: Terry Major-Ball takes to the boards in this light-hearted account of his years in post-war Brixton, working in his father's garden ornament firm.

"One for the family", *Daily Record*

THEATRE

Lyceum

World premiere of **The Number 88 Bus** by discovery of the season Shoona McGussie. Set in a Glasgow DSS hostel, a schizophrenic lesbian baby-sitter hangs herself, after strangling the two-year old daughter of her gay neighbours, following the suicide of her social services lover who has drowned herself in her own urine.

"Unmissable", *The Scotsman*

To the Editor of the Daily Telegraph

Should TV Cameras Replace The Umpire?

SIR–With reference to the controversy which is engulfing the nation over doubtful umpiring decisions during England's recent historic Test Match victory over the South Africans, it may interest your readers to know that in this corner of Dorset the necessary technology is already in place to make the oft-despised "man in the white coat" (Rev. Purvis) a thing of the past even on the village green.

On a recent Sunday afternoon we played our annual needle match against Lytton St Rachey. In the past this fixture has often given rise to acrimonious argument between players and supporters over highly-controversial "run out" and "caught behind" decisions adjudicated by the aforesaid man of the cloth.

On one celebrated occasion, when our landlord Montague Balon was given out "stumped" by the Lytton keeper, the notorious "Chopper" Wedge, when he was still clearly in his place behind the bar *(surely 'crease'? Ed.)*, the resulting fracas became so heated that several members of both teams had to be rushed to our local cottage hospital for emergency treatment.

Today, thank goodness, such scenes of mayhem are mercifully no more.

Thanks to a "whip round" at our annual cricket dinner at the Lamb and Flag, and a generous discount afforded by our local branch of Messrs Timothy White, we have been able to purchase a number of "Instamatic" cameras. These devices are then issued at the beginning of each game to volunteers, who are placed at strategic positions around the boundary.

In the event of a controversial incident, the various films are sent off by express post to Messrs Truprint of Darlington, and after only a short interval of four days the resulting evidence is made available to the umpires, enabling them to arrive at a wholly impartial verdict. How's that for a good idea?

SIR HERBERT GUSSETT
Headingley, Atherton St. Ewart, Dorset.

POETRY CORNER

Lines On The Awarding Of The Order Of Merit To Myself

by The Poet Laureate Ted Hughes

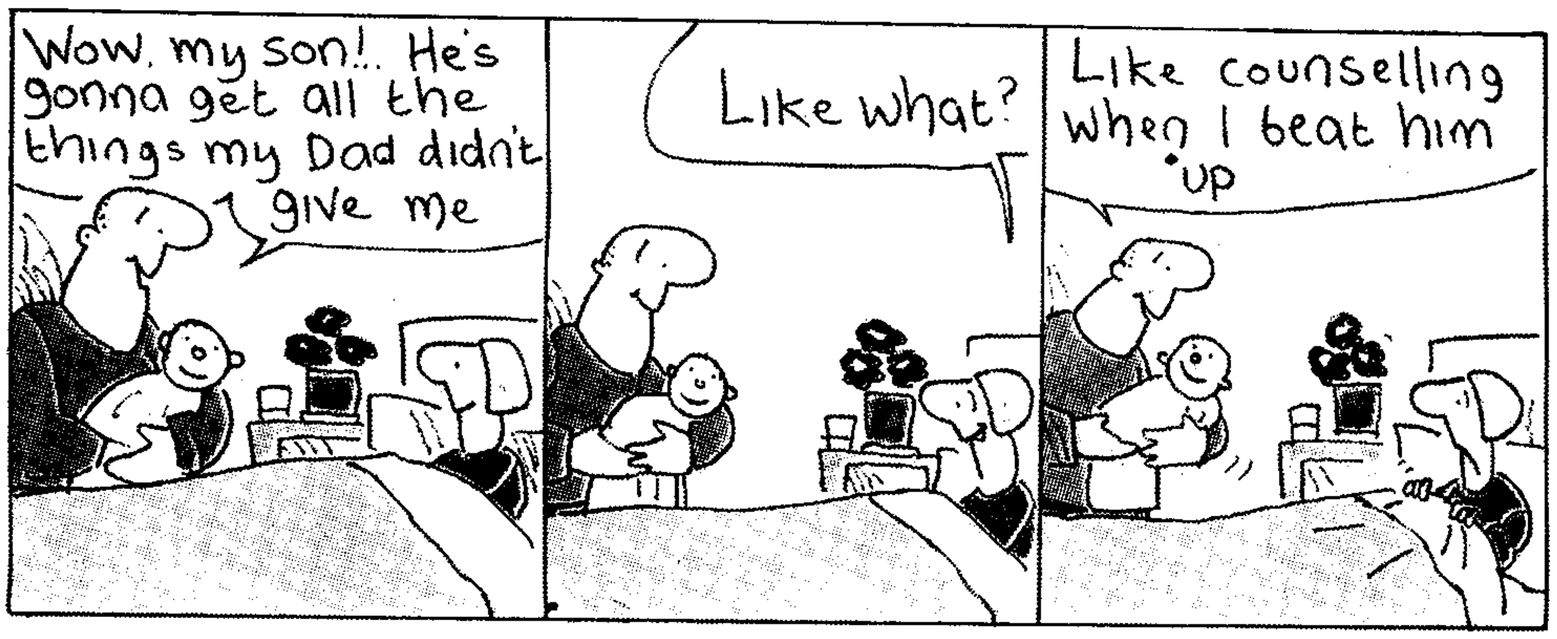
Sharp teeth. Sleek black fur.
Running, running. Freedom!
Minky! Hungry for blood.

Henhouse, hens asleep.
Black paw at the window.
Feathers fly. Squawk, squawk!
Scrunch! Blood splatters window.

BANG! Angry farmer
In pyjamas.
He's a goner, Old Minky.
OM. RIP.

T. Hughes

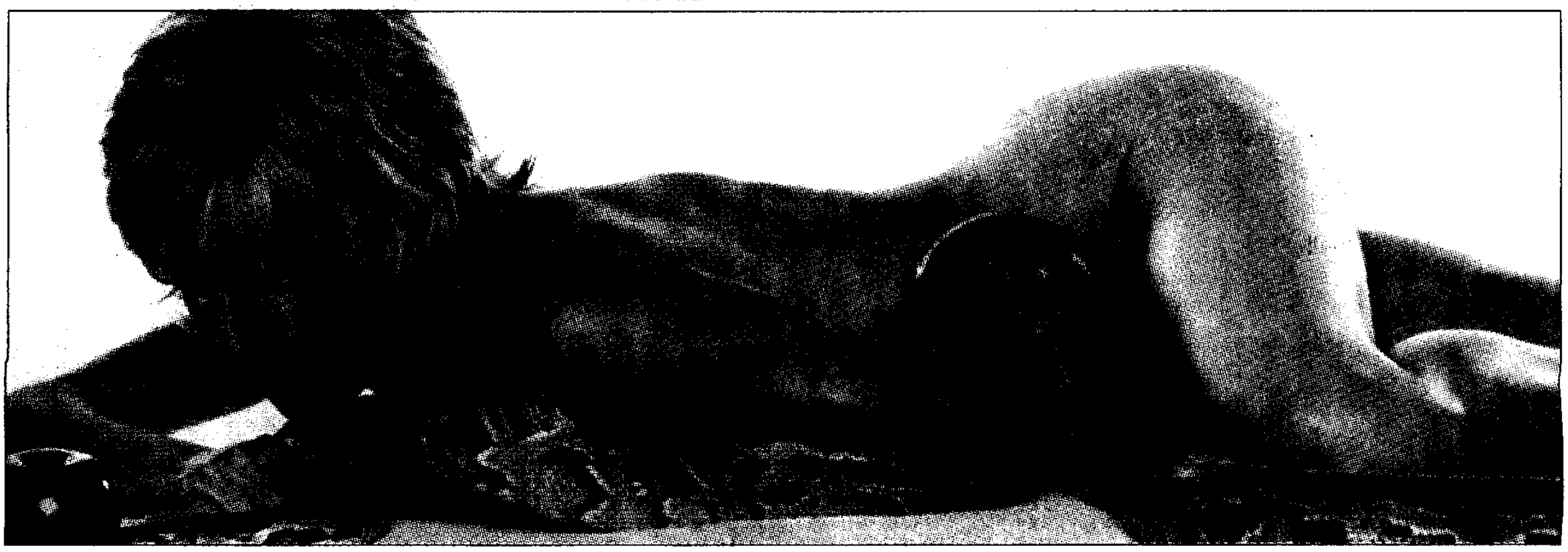
A new collection of Ted Hughes's poems, *The Birthday Honours*, is now available from Tesco and other bookshops.



HUSBAND

The Daily Pornograph

Friday, August 21, 1998



Lotto girl strips off for The Daily Telegraph

by Editor
CHARLES PHWOAR

IN YET another desperate bid to prop up its plummeting circulation (750,000 copies given away daily on trains), *The Daily Telegraph* today printed explicit, no-holds-barred pix of gorgeous, pouting Anthea Turner, 38, wearing nothing but an eight-foot snake.

The Full Monty Python

Defending his decision to boost sales by lifting cheap pornography out of glossy magazines, editor TV's Charles Moore said: "There is nothing to be ashamed of in printing pictures of a healthy young woman embracing a huge snake.

"Few of our older readers will be shocked since they are all dead."

Charles Moore is 79.

The World of Pooh ***by A.A. Milne***

Christopher Robin Goes To The Garrick

One day Christopher Robin decided he would go to London.

"Are you going to Buckingham Palace again," asked Tigger, "to look at the Queen?"

"No," said Christopher Robin. "I'm going to the Garrick Club to have lunch with Pooh. He's going to America for good."

Eeyore looked gloomy. "He won't like it in America," he said. "He'd better stay here and let Alan Bennett do his voice."

"Can I come too?" asked Piglet, getting all excited.

"They'll eat you for lunch," replied Christopher Robin. "They're like that at the Garrick."

"You can't come in here," said the man at the door sternly. "You're not wearing a tie."

"I'll sell you mine for £50," said a nice gentleman with a fruity voice. "By the way, I'm a famous actor. I expect you recognise me."

Christopher Robin was too polite to confess he didn't. "Have you seen my friend Pooh?" he asked. "He's a little bear."

"Aren't we all, sweetie, in this hot weather?" said the beaming actor. "Try the dining room. The Brown Windsor soup is awfully good today."

As Christopher Robin was going up the stairs he saw a familiar sight. A large honey jar and a figure with his head inside.

"Pooh!" he cried. "It's me — Christopher Robin. Are you stuck?"

"No, I'm Norman Lamont, lord to you."

The former Chancellor of the Exchequer extracted his head from the jar and gave Christopher Robin a forlorn look.

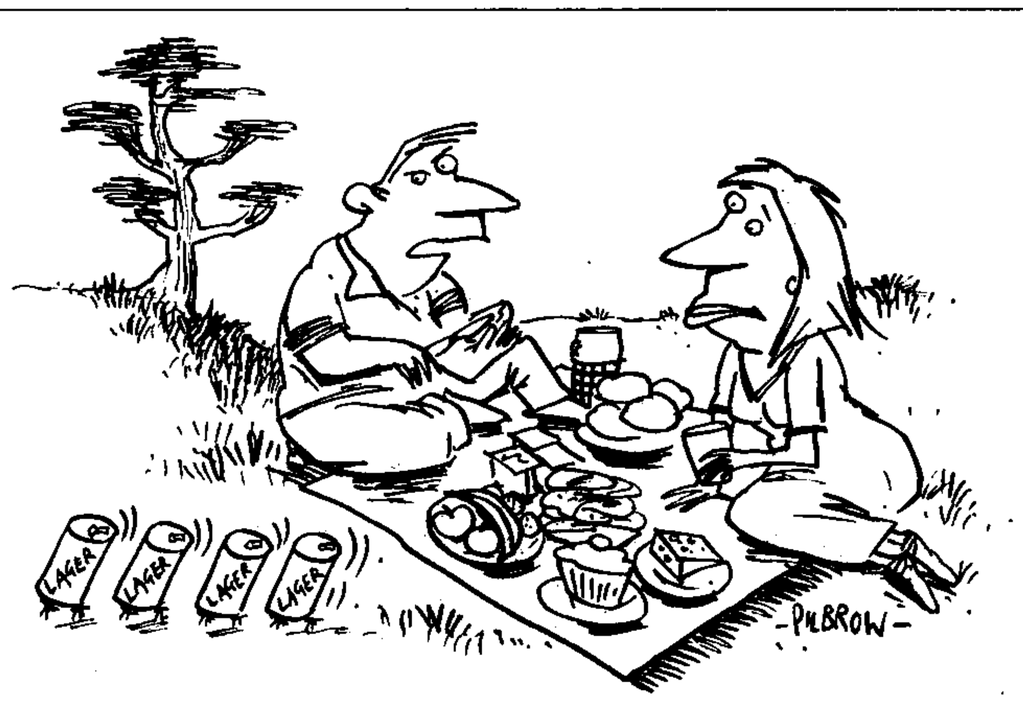
"Isn't it funny how I like money?" he recited in a gloomy voice. "But now I'm not going to get any. Nor is anyone else. They're putting it all in a trust."

"Oh dear," said Christopher Robin. "What will you do now, Mr Lord?"

"I suppose I'll have to go to Threshers and drown my sorrows."

And with that he picked up his plastic bags and climbed into a waiting taxi.

© Copyright Walt Disney



"Damn soldier ants!"

World of Soccer

KNEE v. PEZZA — AT LAST THE TRUTH

by **E.I. Erewego**, Our Man Still In The French Prison

IN A sensational new book published today, *My World Cup Nightmare*, ashen-faced Neasden supremo Ron Knee, 59, spills the beans about his notorious pre-match showdown with wayward midfield genius Baldy "Pezza" Pevsner, 72.

Earlier versions of what happened when the tight-lipped manager told his No. 10 shirt that he was too drunk, fat and old to represent Neasden in the most important match in the club's history described how the two men came to blows in an Armageddon-style punch-up that made a Tyson-Holyfield rematch look like a Teletubbies' teaparty.

Gazzajob

Press reports of the time described how an enraged Pezza "ran amok", smashing furniture, grinding Knee to a pulp and finally burning down the team's palatial hotel HQ, the Neasden Ramada All-Nite Motel (Colour TV and bed in most rooms).

But last night Knee admitted in his book that nothing of this had ever happened.

"When I said 'You have been dropped from the team, Baldy,' he said, 'Whatever you say, guvnor, you're the boss.' He then spent the rest of the evening sitting quietly in a corner of the TV lounge reading an old copy of the Spectator."

Full Backlash

Yet not everyone is happy with Knee's Book Shocker. Fans Sid and Doris Bonkers condemned outright the publication.

"Knee must not be allowed to get away with this," said an angry Sid. "He has totally betrayed the trust invested in him by all the players and fans."

Asked about Knee's suggestion in his book that Pezza would have benefited from the "laying on of hands" from faith healer-cum-masseuse Miss Sharon of the Tesco Read Adult Healing Centre, Bonkers said: "If anyone requires therapy, it is Big Ron. I, for one, would like to lay my hands on him quite frankly."

Ron Knee is £250,000 better off.

Late Score

New North Circular Super League

Neasden 0
Dollis Hill 1
(Pevsner o.g.)

MAN OF MATCH: Dollis Hill's new signing from Dar-Es-Salaam Ntini Fearnley-Whittingstall.

"Rings for your fingers? Wow!"

Racing News

START FIASCO

by Our Racing Correspondent **Christopher Bookie**

THEY'RE *NOT* off! That was the shocking news as sixty thoroughbred hacks lined up for the start of the new-look *Sporting Life* handicap last week.

There was chaos and confusion when Ulster-born senior Steward Major "Rommel" Montgomery lifted the flag for the off but then immediately lowered it.

Red Rum Do

"In all my days I have seen nothing like this," said a bewildered John Mulholland. "I was booked to ride — and now this. It is a disgrace — Montgomery should be sacked and sent back to Northern Ireland where they are used to this sort of thing."

Chief Steward Montgomery

Today's Tips

4.00 Mirror Maniac	13-8 (Nap)
4.30 Wot No Paper!	100-1
5.00 The Fool Monty	5-1

(That's enough tips. Ed.)

JOBLESS FIGURES PLUMMET AS MILLIONS ARE LAID OFF

by Our Industrial Staff **Sir Keith Joseph Conrad Black-August**

HUNDREDS more firms all over Britain went bankrupt yesterday, in the biggest epidemic of industrial closures since records were kept.

But the Chancellor of the Exchequer Mr Gordon Brown assured the nation that there was nothing to worry about, since the Government's figures showed a welcome drop in unemployment to its lowest level since records were kept.

"This all goes to show," said Mr Brown, "that we have at last escaped from the old Tory cycle of boom and bust. Now we just have bust."

Our Economics Editor Sir Peter Jaybotham comments: At first sight there might seem to be a contradiction between yesterday's two sets of figures.

Yet when seasonal factors are taken into account, that is insurances, financial services and the like, we can see that, so far as the M1/M3 equation is concerned, Mr Brown is well on course towards his projection that by the year 2005 *(continued p. 94)*

NURSERY TIMES

FRIDAY AUGUST 21 1998

HOW COULD THEY LET IT HAPPEN?

Storm Grows Over Prince's Safety Blunder

by **Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm**

SAFETY EXPERTS were appalled yesterday when they saw pictures of a young prince climbing a sheer 170-foot tower, relying for support only on the hair of a teenage girl.

A passing wood engraver caught the horrifying scene as the young man began his ascent *of the tower — without* a safety harness, a hard hat, a parachute, a safety net or any of the other items of equipment that experts now regard as essential to anyone attempting a climb of more than 1.4 metres above the ground.

HAIR-RAISING TALE

This was the timetable of horror that has shocked the world:

3.42 p.m. Prince arrives at tower.

3.43 p.m. A young girl, whose name cannot be revealed for legal reasons, lets down a strand of her golden locks from the room at the top of the tower where she had been held in close confinement for twelve years.

3.45 p.m. The prince begins his reckless ascent without a proper safety line or any of the other devices listed above.

3.52 p.m. The prince completes climb.

IT'S A RAP-UNZEL

Last night Palace sources revealed that the Prince's father, King Carbuncle, was "absolutely livid" when he heard of his son's flagrant breach of basic safety rules.

We understand that much of the blame for this incident which has shocked the world attaches to the Prince's guardian, Ms Tiggy Winkle, 46, an elderly hedgehog who could now face dismissal for failing to ensure that the Prince complied with the EC's Personal Protective Equipment (Safety Helmets) Directive 90/46.

Said a spokesman for the Fairyland School of Outward Bound Hairclimbing and Beanstalking: "This was an accident waiting to happen, even though it didn't."

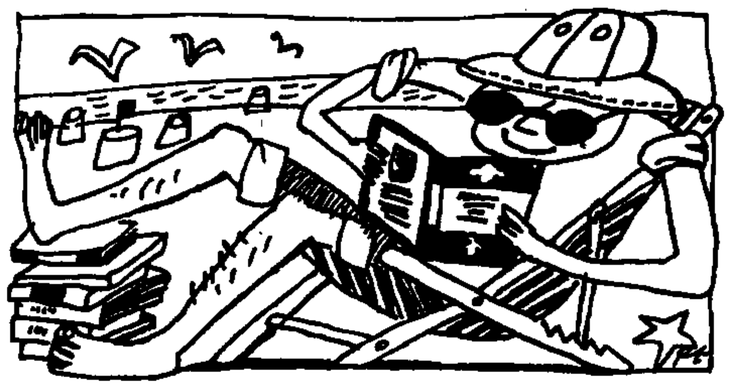
STOP PRESS

Last night it was reported that the mystery blonde in the Royal hairclimbing scandal, a Miss Rapunzel, 18, had been taken into care by social workers.

Harry Enfield's **Bores** Drawn by **Michael Heath** *The Know-All*

"... You were a bloody fool not to buy the house next door to us when I told you to it's just gone for one point six mil' which might amaze you but I saw it coming yes oh yes but now's not the time to buy I'm confidently predicting a ten per cent drop by this time next year & I'm the one to listen to on these things as you know now to your cost no your money's safer in high hield accounts for the time being I sold my shares a month ago I knew the market had to go from bear to bull the blue chips are still way over valued the Far East's gotta go for our balls on this one & I'm right I'm extremely pleased to see that since I got out a lotta guys have lost a lotta money & if you've got any sense you'll listen to me when I say we ain't seen nothin' yet there's a ten per cent drop to come you're right I have sold the Merc' & for five K more than I paid for it a little bird told me Stuttgart's about to increase our quota & when over supply whacks residuals I'm extremely pleased to say I ain't gonna be one of the guys who gets his fingers burnt yup the weather's great I predicted this summer in Jan as you'll remember if you were listening to me which is why we goddouta here in July while it was raining & are now enjoying a GB tan top up the great thing is it's hot but not too hot unlike on the Med where I'm extremely pleased to see there are a lot of bloody ninnies who didn't take my advice & got soaked here in July are now getting their bodies burned serves 'em right no if you've got any sense you'll mark my words very seriously indeed..."

DIARY



HOLIDAY READING: THE EXPERTS' CHOICE

Jeanette Winterson: Umbria, umbrella, umbrage, embroglio, embers, embassy... words have never appeared more naked than on the pages of my new text *I Love Me and You Love Me Too* (Cape, £14.99). For this reason, raisin, rinse-aid, rin-tin-tin, rotten, rattan, I shall be requiring my summer house-guests to read key passages from Winterson up to three times every morning and once after every meal, mule, male, maul, mall.

The Rt Hon Chris Smith: The tremendously exciting buzz that's coming right off the streets, into my left ear, out my right ear and into my Departmental file marked "Explosively Creative" is that so far under New Labour 1998 has been an extraordinarily extraordinary year — impactful, experiential and consolidational — for British literature. This summer, on my really very busy trips to all corners of this cohesive yet varied country of ours, I shall be taking the new *Noel Gallagher: The Collected Lyrics* (Thames and Hudson, £35) in my clutchbag, just to remind myself of everything that's truly vital, young and modern in Tony Blair's New Britain remember get clearance from A. Campbell before faxing.

Jeffrey Archer: Out of a sense of nostalgia, I shall be re-reading Thor Heyerdahl's excellent account of *The Kon-Tiki Expedition*, of which I was a much-valued member. Among new books, *1966: England's Victory* proves a most memorable account of the football team I led to victory at Wembley in 1966 — was it REALLY over thirty years ago?!! I shall also be reading the new biography of *W.G. Grace*, about the great man who first urged me, all those years ago, to become the first duly elected Mayor of London. Finally, I shall devour whatever I can lay my hands on about William Hague — a remarkably gutsy young man who really has what it takes to lead our party to victory just so long as he chooses his close friends from those who have already proved their worth by raising over 30 billion pounds for major British charities.

Fay Weldon: It may be unfashionable to say this, but I wish more people would read books like I do, which is back to front, from End The to One Chapter. For my holiday reading, I will be taking *Perdu Temps du Reserche la A* by one of the greatest of all contemporary female novelists.

Professor Malcolm Bradbury: As I am not a Booker judge this year, I plan to take all last year's 196 Booker entrants on holiday to re-read at my leisure. This will enable me to judge the seismic variations on the current literary scene of each individual text, increasing the accuracy of their gradings in my forthcoming work, a cultural overview of *Literature in England, 1996-1998*, long overdue.

Fay Weldon: I never said I wished more women read books backwards. Okay, so I did say that I wished more women read books backwards, but what I said next wasn't quoted: that personally I read books front-to-back, and that anything I had said in the first half of the sentence should be discounted. But I was being interviewed by a man, so what can you expect? On holiday, I will be reading Proust of course, actually no I won't, yes I will, no I won't.

W.F. Deedes: I look forward to taking the new Dick Francis to the beach. A lot of sand on a beach, and, in my experience, an awful lot of water too, much of it salty. I think it tells you something rather important about holidaymakers that they like to be near so much sand and water. What exactly does it tell you? Don't ask me. Perhaps Dick will enlighten us. I certainly hope so for our sakes. *Plus ça change.*

Fay Weldon: I never said I was being interviewed by a man, so what can you expect? I feel tremendously sorry for men in the 1990s, much sorrier for them than I do for women, who have far more seats than men in Parliament and hold the whip-hand in commerce and industry. And it's high time we all came to terms with the fact that the Prime Minister is a woman — and about time too.

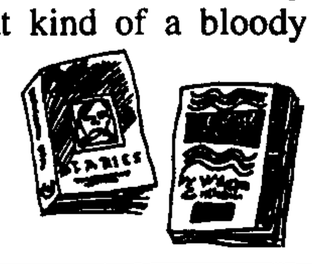
Anthony Powell: This summer, I will be re-reading the entire *oeuvre* of Graham Greene, in order to confirm my opinion that he really was a third-rate writer, perhaps even fourth-rate, almost as flat-footed, in his way, as poor old Evelyn. I may also attempt to struggle through Scott Fitzgerald. Very American and very dead I fear.

Fay Weldon: I never said that the Prime Minister is a woman, because she isn't. That's men for you! Instead, I shall be reading the new Jeffrey Archer this summer, because he is easily the greatest female novelist since Dickens.

Clive James: Sitting poolside, I plan to sigh by the pool as I dust up highbrowly on my Dostoievsky by re-reading Fyodor in the original Spanish. Yes, J'adore F'yodor — and that's one "door" I'll open for no "fee" at all.

Jilly Cooper: Call me a great big soppy floppy-eared puppy, but I simply can't *bear* the idea of going on my hols without *Finnegans Wake* by the smashing James Joyce — a blissfully long, sexy book, perfect for the beach — better known in my family as *Fun Again's Wakey-wakey* (whoops! pardon the pun!).

Harold Pinter: My holiday reading is my own private affair. How dare you pester me about something that's my own business? I can bloody read what I bloody like. What is this, a police state? Next you'll be torturing me with leg irons and sticking lighted cigarettes into my armpits until I scream out vital information about my holiday reading. What kind of a bloody world is this anyway? Come on, Antonia, get your bag, we don't have to take this any longer, we're off.



SUPERMODELS

AT THE ANTHEA TURNER/PYTHON SHOOT:
DON'T BE AFRAID, IT'S SLEEPING— IT WON'T WAKE UP.
TATLER MAGAZINE
JUST TRY NOT TO MAKE ANY SUDDEN JERKY MOVEMENTS!
OKAY!
TATLER

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Saffron Walden Reporter

Literary Review

North of the boredom

SOME 64 years ago, with a certain amount of help from his chum, the musician Constant Lambert, Anthony Powell sat down and penned a little-known addition to his considerable oeuvre.

And yet the importance of *Caledonia: A Fragment* (the whole thing is reprinted in Kingsley Amis's *The New Oxford Book of Light Verse*) — only a hundred or so copies of which ever saw daylight — is out of all proportion to its tiny circulation. It is nothing more, in fact, than a wounding exposé of Scottish artistic pretensions written by an Englishman fed up with the attention paid (mostly by Englishmen) to some very dubious north-of-the-border talents.

Some caring person ought to send a copy of *Caledonia* to a few London literary editors. I mean, don't laugh, but the fact is we're slap in the middle of a Scottish literary renaissance.

No, seriously. Irvine Welsh. Alan Warner. Duncan McLean. They're major figures in contemporary literature, don't you know, and the broadsheet arts sections can't get enough of their canny opinions and saucy patois.

Their influence has spread all the way down the literary chain and even the tyro efforts in the Flamingo-sponsored *New Scottish Writing* routinely kick into gear with a few lochside throat-clearings of the "And they aw lived happily ever efter" kind.

No prizes for guessing where it all started. Although there had been mention of Alasdair Gray before, the pivotal text of the 'I belong to Glasgie' movement was *Lean Tales* (1985). Gray was way down there in lost marbles territory, but the contributions of James Kelman and Agnes Owens caused many a southern jaw to drop.

London editors swooped, Kelman started appearing in hardback, won the Booker (1994's *How Late It Was, How Late*), got dropped by the fashionable young critics for, well, having been around a bit and preferring alcohol to drugs, and the cry went up for something younger and more media friendly.

Step forward Irv, Alan and the rest of Jim's children. The ironies attendant upon this wave of Scots lads wafting into the bookshops of southern England are pretty considerable. Here we are on the cusp of the millennium, with a devolved Scots parliament about to preside over the march of its sturdy independent people into the sunlit, heather-strewn uplands and the books everyone is reading (no, make that 'alleged to be reading') are all about, er, doped up hooligans being sick in the streets of Strathclyde.

Then there's the inescapable fact that what we have here is predominantly an English conspiracy. Check out the group of fan-wavers lined up on the flap of Alan Warner's recently published *The Sopranos* — Jason Cowley, Elizabeth Young, Jenny Turner, trendy young Londoners, all of them.

Where to go for a contract? The literary impresario behind much of this — and publisher of Welsh, Warner and another much-fancied newcomer, Gordon Legge — is the undeniably Scottish Robin Robertson. But he works out of Random House's premises in Vauxhall Bridge Road.

So in the end, as a critic once put it when Kelman began to scoop the column inches, it's only getting money out of the fucking English. But the biggest irony, sadly, is that the books, for the most part, aren't any good.

Never mind Irv's scatological fixations and his chronically limited stylistic repertoire, as revealed in the aptly named *Filth*, Alan Warner's *The Sopranos* (Cape, £9.99), which English critics have been creaming themselves over for the past couple of months, is even duller — a girls' school choir outing replete with vomitings, stomach-pumpings, pregnancies and self-conscious dialogue.

The problem, here as elsewhere in the Scots new wave, is that while everybody can do patois-fuelled vignettes (some of Warner's incidental bits are actually rather good) nobody has the discipline to assemble the whole into anything that resembles a novel — oh, or contains ordinary people who don't take drugs and swear a lot.

Meanwhile, of course, there are other kinds of Scottish writing that get no look in at all. For my money, one of the best "Scottish" novelists writing today is Allan Massie (check out the excellent *Shadows of Empire*, Vintage, £6.99).

Unfortunately, Mr Massie is a crotchety, 60-year-old Tory who writes columns for the *Telegraph*, which cuts no ice at all with the book page trendies. All this will pass, of course, and in a decade or so we shall no doubt remember all this tosh with the indulgent smile it deserves.

All the same, it's mildly annoying that, at a time when the English regional novel is beginning to raise its head again, and to considerable effect, all we should get in the literary supplements is truckloads of Gaelic rambling.

WHAT YOU DIDN'T MISS, PART 94

Life Regained: Diaries 1970-1972

Frances Partridge

(Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £18.99)

13 May 1970

Some, but not much, in fact a little, conversation with Boffles* about tomatoes. He surprised me by saying an element of possessiveness is vital in relationships with fruit. Pondered this in the car on the way to dinner with Fluffy** and Mowcher***. Mowcher's sad, sweet, delicate face as ever a revelation.

11 November 1970

A difficult meal at the Hope-Tippings. Lionel, now bed-ridden alas, is in love with Perdita; Perdita (who cooked a palatable ragout) understandably subdued; Anthea outwardly serene and yet, I suspect, inwardly defiant. Talked of death, life, art etc. A telephone call from a young man on a newspaper asking what Ralph really thought of Lytton, and whether Fluffy really slept with Bunty****. Assented cautiously to his suggestion of an interview.

The autumn now hastening uncontrollably on: sere leaves, fecund soil, wind. One is continually surprised by the inevitability of the seasons. At least, that was Virginia's view.

31 December 1970

Power cuts, strikes, intransigence on the part of the council workers. I fear the conditions of wartime will descend once more on our grey and battered London streets. Cooked an agreeable supper of poulet and tarragon, braised endives etc for Polo and Koko*****. These young minds, with their quiet humility and genuine interest in Lytton and Virginia, always invigorating. Boffles rang to say that he was leaving Ariadne, that Fluffy is dying and Mowcher contemplating suicide. So ends the old year.

---

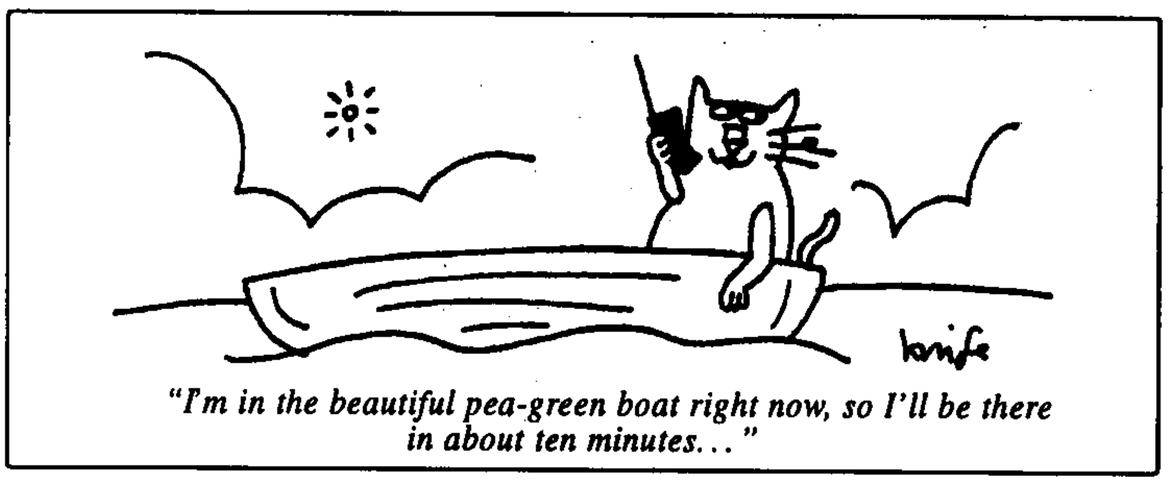
* Lord Cyril Boffington (1899-1980), celebrated Bloomsbury wit and patron of the arts.

** The Hon Venetia Starborgling (1904-1973), literary hostess and author of *Virginia: a Chum for Life*.

*** AE Mowchester, critic and homosexual, author of *Dadie, I Hardly Knew You*.

**** Sir Hyacinth Buntingford (1901-67), aesthete and landowner.

***** Twin daughters of Lady Fenella Artichoke.



"I'm in the beautiful pea-green boat right now, so I'll be there in about ten minutes..."

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

■ EVERY author hopes that if the critics are against you and sales of your latest work disappoint, your publisher at least will maintain faith in your talent.

Not so for culture secretary Chris Smith and his magnum opus, *Creative Britain*. The critical rancour surrounding the book had a predictable effect on sales and bookshops are queuing to return unsold copies to Faber & Faber.

Publishers usually accept copies in good condition and try to unload them in other markets. But booksellers who have phoned Faber about Smith's work have been told simply to tear off the Damien Hirst cover and send that back as proof of purchase for a full refund. The rest can be binned.

■ **THE mystery of the touching up of Grocer Heath has been solved. In the last *Eye* (956), Bookworm noted the curious credit given to photographer Jane Bown, who took the portrait of the Grocer which adorns Heath's forthcoming autobiography, *The Course of My Life*: "Based on an original photograph by Jane Bown." Was this evidence of some form of doctoring, we wondered?**

Indeed it was. Bown tells the *Eye*: "My original photograph, taken about 12 years ago, was in black and white." The picture on the book cover, however, is in full, glorious Grocercolor — which explains the uncanny youthfulness of the ageing former prime minister's ruddy cheeks and bright blue eyes.

■ WHEN Alexander Waugh was sacked as opera critic of the *Evening Standard* it gave him the opportunity to develop what he modestly refers to as "the most revolutionary concept in book publishing since the invention of the paperback" — the single short story that folds like a map. Waugh, son of Auberon and grandson of Evelyn, hopes to make his fortune selling classic, mostly out-of-copyright short stories by authors such as DH Lawrence, HG Wells and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

The Bookseller described the list, launched last month, as the "brainchild" of Waugh, "who came up with the idea in conversation with William Trevor, a modern master of the short story form". Waugh told the trade paper: "I've been working on it more or less in secret for the past two years. It's such a simple idea, I was very nervous that someone else would come along with it."

In fact, someone else did come along with it as long ago as 1982 — as Alexander Waugh knows perfectly well. American publisher James Schmidt's *Tales For Travellers* series has published 60 stories in exactly the same format in the US. Many are by the same authors as Waugh's series — including, by an amazing coincidence, William Trevor.

When contacted by the *Eye*, Waugh blamed the press for giving him all the credit. "I never claimed it was all my own idea," he said. "It's still a great idea, whoever invented it."

'Bookworm'

footnotes

Meacher

Short

Smith

Blair

ROSCO GOLD

New Labour and the great train robbery

THE facts of the Rosco scandal — the most blatant looting of the public purse in the entire history of transport — are set out clearly in a recent report of the Commons public accounts committee (PAC).

In the first phase of the Tory government's rail privatisation in 1996, the three Roscos ("rolling stock leasing companies") which were given the country's entire railway rolling stock, were flogged off for £1.8bn — and sold on a few months later for £2.7bn.

The chief beneficiaries of the racket were three unremarkable former British Rail bureaucrats who bought the companies from the government and sold them on without adding a single railway carriage to the assets. Tony Jukes invested £110,000 and got £15.9m. Steve Anderson invested £120,000 and got £33.5m. John Prideaux invested nothing at all and got £15m.

The committee (chairman: David Davis, a former Tory minister) slaps a few wrists here and there. The former permanent secretary to the department of transport, Sir Patrick Brown, is gently censured; as are Hambros bank, who got their huge fees from the government while chairman Charles Hambro was treasurer of the Tory party. The real culprits — the politicians — get off with hardly a cross word. Sir George Young, the transport secretary, and his guru, Kenneth Clarke, chancellor of the exchequer, who colluded to flog off the Roscos in ludicrous haste in time for the 1997 general election, are not even named.

The committee, with its in-built Labour majority, is even kinder to the Labour party. Almost everyone who gave evidence to the committee emphasised what Brian Souter, chairman of Stagecoach, called "the uncertainty about railway privatisation" in early 1996 when the Roscos were sold. "Nobody would touch it with a bargepole," said Souter. "They did not know whether privatisation would happen." Mr Jukes was more direct: "The timing of the election was not known," he said.

There was really only one reason why everyone was so nervous: the threat that a new Labour government would buy the railways back at the original selling price. This threat had been stated plainly over and over again by the Labour leaders.

In 1993 Labour's transport spokesman was John Prescott. He told a delirious Labour party conference: "Let me make it crystal clear that any privatisation of the railway system that does take place will, on the arrival of a Labour government, be quickly and effectively dealt with with the full support of the community and be returned to public ownership."

In 1994 Labour's transport spokesman was Frank Dobson. His position at conference was as crystal clear as ever: "Let me give this pledge not just to this conference but to the people of Britain. The next Labour Government will reverse the break-up and privatisation of Britain's railways. We will bring the railway system back into public ownership."

In 1995 Labour's transport spokesman was Michael Meacher, who warmed conference with a slashing attack on rail privatisation. "This is market mania for you," he declared, to an ovation. "And that is why we are going to stop this privatisation in its tracks. If there are any investors listening who are thinking of buying into our rail system, I have a message for them. The railways depend on public subsidies to the tune of £1.8bn a year. There is no guarantee that that subsidy will continue. If you want to buy a pig in a poke in all those circumstances, then it is up to you, but don't come crying to me when it all ends in tears."

This message was repeated to conference by the party leader, Tony Blair. "To anyone thinking of grabbing our railways, built up over the years, so they can make a quick profit as our network is broken up and sold off, I say this: there will be a publicly-owned and publicly-accountable railway system under a Labour government. We can then save hundreds of millions which are being wasted on selling our railways to upgrade the service and modernise our lines. That is New Labour too." (Long applause.)

CRYSTAL CLEAR PLEDGES: John Prescott (left) and Frank Dobson

Soon after the conference Michael Meacher was shifted sideways and replaced by Clare Short. She continued to make noises about nationalising the railways. So in January and February 1996, when the three Roscos came up for sale, Labour was entirely committed to a publicly-owned railway which would be brought about at least in part by starving the new privatised companies of the subsidies they needed to survive.

The election had to be called by May 1997. All the polls pointed to a heavy Labour victory. Naturally the big investors were wary of buying any part of such a doomed enterprise. They backed off and left the field to scratch teams of former BR managers who bid derisory prices for the Roscos — and got the goods.

Over the next few months, however, in the words of Brian Souter to the public accounts committee: "There was a very rapid change in sentiment about these businesses... railways, from being very unfashionable, became very fashionable with investors. All of a sudden information was available in the market and people began to work out, despite how unpopular this measure is politically, that there is a bob in it for business people."

What brought about this rapid change, this sudden sense of a bob in the offing? There is only one answer. A sea change in the attitude of the Labour party.

Clare Short started to equivocate and was switched. In her place came a fervent Blair loyalist, Andrew Smith. Urgent and secret discussions took place with the privatisers. By August, when Stagecoach bought the first Rosco for nearly £300m more than the government had sold it for eight months earlier, Labour's policy had completely changed. The U-turn was completed at the party's last conference in opposition in September 1996.

So triumphalist was the mood that no one noticed the subtle shift in emphasis in the leaders' speeches about the railways. Out went the pledges for a publicly-owned and publicly-accountable railway. In came:

From Andrew Smith: "The way forward is to deploy the necessary public ownership and accountability to create a modern railway. We will use the regulator's formidable powers and a publicly-owned British Rail to meet clear goals."

From Blair: "We will give Britain a modern integrated transport network, built in partnership between public and private finance, and restoring a unified system of railways with a publicly-owned publicly-accountable British Rail at its core. Good for us, and good for business" (applause).

The references to British Rail were irrelevant. The point was not whether British Rail would survive "at the core" (it still survives today, though it does nothing and nobody notices it), but whether the privatised railway would be taken into public ownership. As was obvious from Smith's reference to the regulator's "formidable powers", the answer had changed from yes to no.

The privatised railway had been adopted by Labour and it was therefore perfectly safe for the Forward Trust to buy the second Rosco two months later — for £208m more than the government got for it 11 months earlier, and for the Royal Bank of Scotland to grab the third Rosco in December 1997 for £389m more than the government had got for it the previous year.

While the railways were being privatised, there were two clear courses open to Labour leaders. They could have gone along with privatisation from the start, reassured the City, and ensured at least that the taxpayer got the best possible price for the flogged-off railway. Or they could have stood firm by their policy of renationalisation on the worst possible terms for the privatisers — and ensured at least that any speculator who bought a Rosco would end up with a hole in his pocket. By taking neither course, by turning first this way then the other, the Labour leaders achieved the worst possible result: low prices at first, high prices later, grotesque profiteering at public expense — and a privately owned and unaccountable railway.

Don't call us, we'll BAsh you

ONLY the *Guardian* reported briefly on 12 August that former policeman John Gorman has been awarded £2,000 for an attack on him at his London home four years ago. The details of the attack appeared in *Eye* 849 (1 July 1994).

For about a year before the article, Mr Gorman, who had twice complained about the state of the food on British Airways flights, had been getting abusive and homophobic telephone calls. The calls were traced by British Telecom to British Airways or to Heathrow police station.

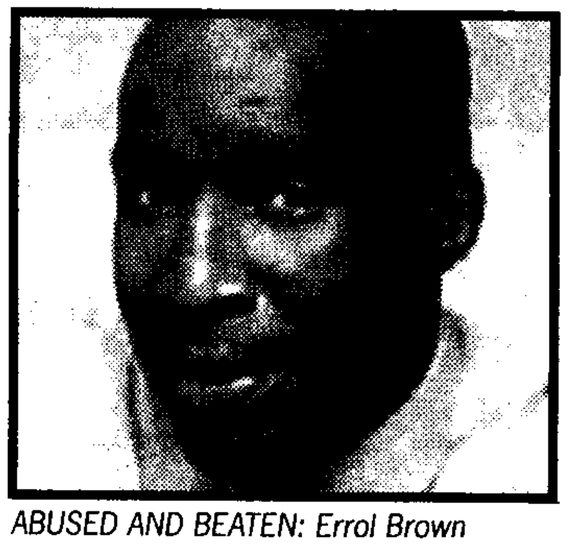
When Gorman sued British Airways, his car was spray-painted with the words NO WIN WITH BA. On 14 June 1994 Gorman won an extension of time for his action. The *Eye* reported: "On Friday 17th June, Mr Gorman was in his garden when a neighbour told him some electricity meter men had been let into the house and were asking for him. On the stairs he encountered two well-dressed men who greeted him by spraying his face with a toxic

THE JOHN GORMAN STORY

substance. Mr Gorman managed to call the police and an ambulance. A doctor at Nuffield hospital treated his eyes and said he was lucky to have kept his sight."

Again and again British Airways and police spokesmen have mocked this story, alleging that Gorman made it all up. Gorman persisted with a claim for damages from the criminal injuries compensation board. A hearing was arranged for 11 August. In the chair was His Honour Judge Eric Stockdale, flanked by the former Tory MP Norman Miscampbell QC and Daniel Hollis QC, a former crown court recorder. The panel heard Gorman's story, read the doctors' reports and concluded that Gorman had indeed been attacked in the way he alleged. Their award of £2,000 was unusually high.

Meanwhile John Gorman has been the victim of yet another volley of abuse from British Airways. On 19 June he wrote to British Airways, informing them that he planned to attend British Airways' annual general meeting on 14 July and to ask a question about the way he had been treated. On 26 June, at his home in Tenerife, he had a phone call from an anonymous man who warned him that if he attended the agm his elderly mother would be subjected to "serious physical harm". On 13 July, when he was staying with his partner's parents in London, another anonymous caller warned: "Tell Gorman not to attend the agm tomorrow or we will carry out our threat." The phone was fitted with a BT display unit which showed the number calling as 0181-759-6720. British Telecom has eventually confirmed that the number is a commercial line which does not take incoming calls. The line is allocated to British Airways at Heathrow.



ABUSED AND BEATEN: Errol Brown

Marion kind

IT WAS a typical autumn scene in sunny Hampshire. Police had stopped a car driven by a black man. The car, the police alleged, had been doing 38mph — 8mph over the limit.

The driver got out of the car to talk to the police. After a long wait, the passenger, Errol Brown, protested about the delay.

He was accused of "having an attitude problem" and arrested. More police cars arrived. A fracas followed. Mr Brown was handcuffed and pulled to the ground. While he was lying there, PC Martin Warnes shouted: "I don't care if I lose my job over this, you black cunt," and kicked Mr Brown in the face.

Mr Brown was duly charged with assaulting police officers. When the case came to Aldershot magistrates court in September 1994, police witnesses told different stories. WPC Marion Woods confirmed that Mr Brown had been abused and struck. The magistrates dismissed the case.

Mr Brown sued Hampshire police. The case has just been settled out of court. Hants police have paid Mr Brown £15,000 without admitting liability.

Hants police tell the *Eye* that PC Marion Woods was transferred to "a home office force" on 2 October 1994, a few days after her decisive evidence to the magistrates. What about PC Warnes? He is still serving in Hants police, based at Basingstoke. Asked why he had not been disciplined, a Hants police spokesman referred the *Eye* to the police complaints authority (PCA).

The PCA explained: "PCA member Jim Elliott upheld Mr Brown's complaint that he was racially abused by an officer. The officer advanced the defence that he was concussed and suffering from post-traumatic automatism. This condition can cause individuals to behave in ways which are out of character, inappropriate and of which they will have no subsequent memory. The authority does not condone any racially discriminatory behaviour and would normally take appropriate disciplinary action. However, on this occasion Mr Elliott felt that a charge could not be proved beyond reasonable doubt... There were conflicts of medical and witness evidence which meant the allegations of assault could not be proved beyond reasonable doubt."

THE ADAMS FAMILY

IN THE week after Stephen Lawrence was murdered, his parents' lawyer, Imran Khan, bombarded the murder inquiry headquarters at Eltham police station with demands for information. Were any suspects identified, he asked, and had any been arrested? On 27 April, four days after the murder, DCI Brian Weeden replied, promising better liaison with the family.

On 30 April a very senior officer, Commander Ray Adams, who was based at Eltham, signed a letter to the solicitor indicating that "Chief Superintendent Philpot is available as well as I to assist you and other interested parties." Why did the commander intervene in this way?

When he gave evidence to the Lawrence inquiry on 16 July, Mr Adams explained that he was "helping out with correspondence".

Under cross-examination from Michael Mansfield for the Lawrence family, Mr Adams insisted he had not known anything about the investigation. He had not known the names of the suspects; he had never heard of Clifford Norris, the gangster whose son David was an early suspect for the murder; and he did not even know that the murder inquiry was based in his own police station. He was helping out with a letter and had no intention of playing any further part in the proceedings.

He had little chance to do much else. The letter, which was drafted on 30 April, was not sent until 4 May. On the same morning Mr Adams left the police force never to return. He was ordered to go off sick with a bad back. He retired the following August. He later joined the international investigators, Kroll Associates, as did another senior officer in the Lawrence inquiry, former detective chief superintendent William Illsley.

Those attending the inquiry that day were puzzled as to the drift of Mansfield's questions to Adams. This was cleared up by Jeremy Gompertz QC, for the Metropolitan police, who asked Adams:

Q: Putting it boldly, the suggestion is that you are a corrupt, dishonest former police officer who did his best to at least slow down, if not stop, the arrest of David Norris and others because of an association with David Norris's father Clifford. You know that is the effect of the questioning this morning?

A: Yes, sir, I do.

Q: Is there the slightest truth in it?

A: Sir, I have brought my retirement certificate here today because I thought it might be relevant. I am described as exemplary. I am one of the most decorated police officers in this country. To suggest that I tried

to influence this inquiry is an insult to me and it is an insult to the Lawrence family. I would describe it as rubbish, as nonsense, as spurious, as invented. It is a Merlin's broth of magic and innuendo and nudges. There is not an ounce of truth in it. I defy anybody to produce one ounce of evidence to suggest this. It does not exist. It hurts me.

PS: Mr Adams was for 18 months in the 1980s head of Scotland Yard's crack SO11 intelligence unit. Three other senior officers who were in SO11 when he was there were William Illsley, Ian Crampton and Brian Weeden, all of whom became senior officers in the Stephen Lawrence murder investigation.

Why are they weighting?

■ THE *EYE* asked the Benefits Agency, whose officers keep a tight rein on other people's benefits, to confirm information from members of the Public and Commercial Services Union about directors' pay.

Our question was: "Is it true that Benefits Agency directors out of London are paid London weighting allowances?" The *Eye* asked in particular about the London weighting allowance allegedly paid to West of Scotland director John Brown, who works in the agency's office in Glasgow, and the suggestion that the cost to the taxpayer of paying London weighting to directors outside London is more than £300,000 a year.

Here is the agency's full reply, which has been entered by the *Eye* for the 1998 Quango Press Officers' Straight Answers to Straight Questions award: "A member of staff who is posted out of the London Weighting Area will have their London salary protected at point of transfer on a mark-time basis."

You can write to Paul Foot at Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 0171 287 3183

In the City

THE song may be over but the Tiny melody lingers on for the phoney pharaoh, Mohamed Fayed, who is expected to be his usual discreet, tasteful self as the anniversary of the Paris crash nears.

Despite the death of his arch-enemy last month — Fayed's private comments were characteristically less hypocritical than his public restraint — the civil case for damages over the breaking into "Tiny" Rowland's Harrods safe deposit box looks set to continue. Rowland's executors have taken legal advice over six writs claiming conspiracy, trespass, wrongful conversion and breach of contract and copyright issued last December against Fayed and several Harrods executives. They plan to pursue the actions on behalf of the estate. Indeed it is possible the case could be in the high court as early as October.

This will be bad news for Fayed, whose lawyers have already admitted that he knew the box was broken into in December 1995 and Rowland's possessions removed, examined and copied. It could also be embarrassing for one-time Fayed-friendly biographer Tom Bower, who worked his passage into Fayed's favours helped by his less than flattering 1993 biography of the ex-Lonrho tycoon.

Relations with the phoney pharaoh, however, have greatly cooled since Bower embarked on a similar exercise on Fayed which is due to be published shortly. But back in 1996 relations were much warmer. So much so that it appears Rowland — no doubt wrongly — suspected Bower may have been allowed to share some of the secrets of his safe deposit box. That was Rowland's immediate ill-informed assumption when he learned last year about the break-in and recalled a remarkably well informed August 1996 article by Bower and others in the *Sunday Times*.

This claimed that Rowland had been blackmailed by former British spy Dusan Popov over a 1954 £2.3m fraud on a Swiss bank. Popov, it was claimed, had alleged that Rowland, using the alias Ernest Raven, had collected the money for an undelivered copper shipment to Poland the ex-spy had arranged. The article contained references to correspondence from the 60s and featured a copy of a 1975 deposit slip payment to Popov. Rowland thought he recalled that by remarkable coincidence certain documents relating to Popov had been in the Harrods safe deposit box when he visited it for the first time in more than 10 years in 1995. A visit that triggered the break-in by Fayed's employees wearing rubber gloves.

By another remarkable coincidence Bower's *Daily Mail* obituary of Rowland also contained a photograph of his elder brother Raimund in Wehrmacht uniform while fighting for the Nazis. Rowland family members thought they too recalled that this photograph also may have been in the safe deposit box.

It is perhaps not surprising that in view of the *Sunday Times* coincidence and doubtless unfounded allegations, the Scotland Yard team investigating the Harrods break-in was eager to hear Bower's explanations after arresting Fayed and the five executives involved in the events surrounding the Rowland deposit box last March. Indeed contacts were made with the biographer and his lawyers in the months that followed. Bower was only too happy to help with inquiries and was able to satisfy the police that at no time had he been knowingly provided with access to documents in the Rowland safe deposit box by Fayed or his allies.

Ironically the crown prosecution service (CPS) had decided not to prosecute Fayed or the executives who carried out the break-in just days before Rowland died because there was "no realistic prospect of a conviction". That decision is believed to have been greatly influenced by a surprise U-turn by lawyers acting for Helga Schwarzschild, whose family heirlooms had disappeared from a Harrods deposit box after it had been opened for non-payment of rent, dropping her complaint. This followed the opening of negotiations by Harrods' lawyers over the possible return of some or all of the jewellery plus compensation after Schwarzschild had threatened to sue.

The CPS was not keen to proceed with a prosecution in which Rowland was the only complainant because of his long-running feud with Fayed. Rowland would also have been the chief witness to his claim that emeralds and other valuable items worth more than £200,000 had disappeared from the box.

Even if the CPS had decided to prosecute this decision would certainly have been reversed following Rowland's death. But the same may not be so of the civil case. Lawyers for the estate believe the admissions made by Fayed about his knowledge of the break-in by his closest aides, plus the examination and copying of Rowland's documents, photographs and tapes, provide ample evidence for a claim for damages even though Fayed says he did not authorise the break-in. There are also documents missing from an inventory of the box contents made before the break-in. Not surprisingly Rowland's family is anxious to discover what has happened to these private papers.

So Rowland may yet, from beyond the grave, have his revenge in court on Fayed who has never testified publicly on anything since he took over Harrods in 1984 and the feud began. That is unless there is a settlement or Fayed can legally strike-out the action. All of which can be far from happy news for home secretary Jack Straw, who continues to ponder the decision over whether the man who claims that MI6, on behalf of the queen and her government, murdered Princess Diana, is fit and proper enough to be awarded British citizenship.

ENTHUSIASTIC predictions that directors of three major insurance companies could be charged over the pensions mis-selling scandal may prove as wide of the mark as similar forecasts a year ago.

Directors of Legal & General, Guardian Royal Exchange and Sun Life of Canada are said to be in the Scotland Yard frame as a result of a lengthy fraud squad investigation. But the problem — as highlighted last year in *Eye* 930 — is that the very financial services act (FSA) under which directors could be prosecuted for the crimes of their greedy, commission-driven salesmen, also contains a hard-to-beat "get-out-of-jail" clause.

"Directory enquiries? I'm just phoning to ask who I am"

Section 47(1) of the FSA makes it a criminal offence to make a misleading, false or deceptive statement when selling an investment such as a personal pension. This is clearly aimed at salesmen more than directors. But section 47(3) of the 1986 act then goes on to state that for anyone charged with "any course of conduct which creates a false or misleading impression... It shall be a defence for him to prove that he reasonably believed that his act or conduct would not create an impression that was false or misleading."

Those with knowledge of the Yard investigation suspect it may be very difficult to prove to the criminal test of beyond a reasonable doubt that a salesman, never mind a main board director, was acting on the basis of unreasonable beliefs. It might not be sufficient to show that persuading employees to switch out of occupational pensions and into personal pensions was bad advice. After all, the Thatcher government was all for it! The requirement might be for evidence that directors knowingly instructed salesmen to sell a product which they had to know at the time would never be superior to an occupational pension or was based on knowingly false or reckless predictions of growth.

It may equally be hard to prove that directors were "reckless" as required by the act in making misleading statements about the performance of personal pensions. Where does over-enthusiasm end and recklessness begin when it comes to projecting stock market returns which drive all pensions?

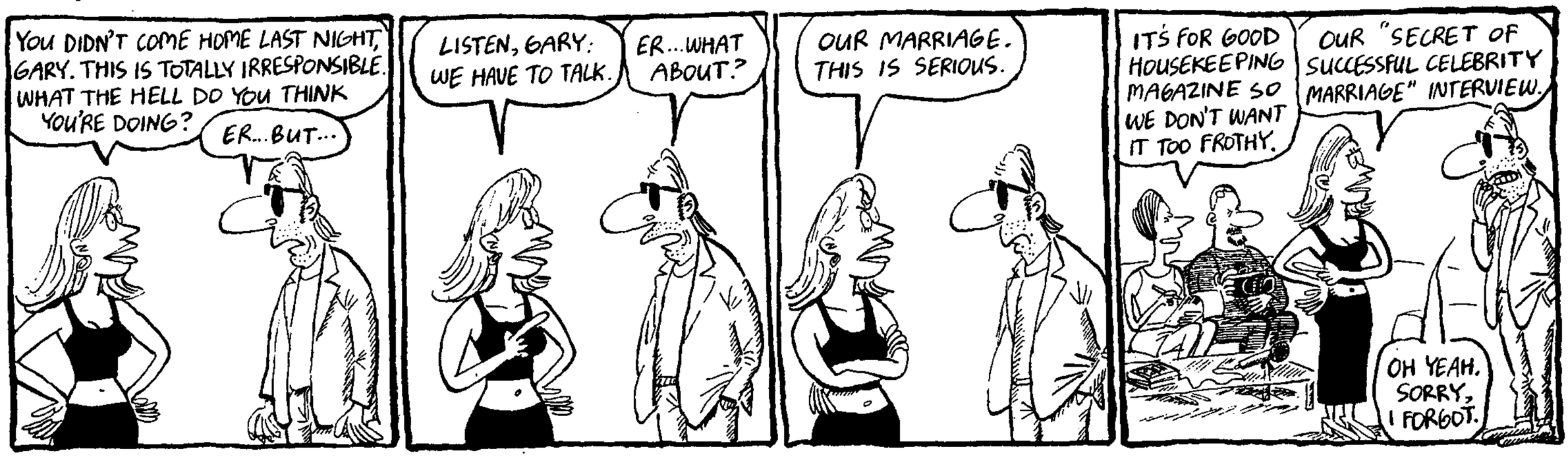
Finally, it seems difficult to establish a case for prosecuting directors on the basis of a single complaint from a mis-sold customer. Any action against an insurance company and its directors would probably need to show a widespread pattern of bad, unacceptable or knowingly improper behaviour. Otherwise the boardroom response would be that any single mis-sold pension was the result of a "rogue" salesman acting contrary to company policy.

The litany of failed corporate manslaughter prosecutions shows how difficult it is to convict senior men in suits for the actions of their employees. Pensions may prove little different. And with pensions the extra excuse could be that the companies are paying compensation by the billion.

'Slicker'

Celeb

LIGGER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ER...BUT...
LISTEN, GARY: WE HAVE TO TALK.
ER...WHAT ABOUT?
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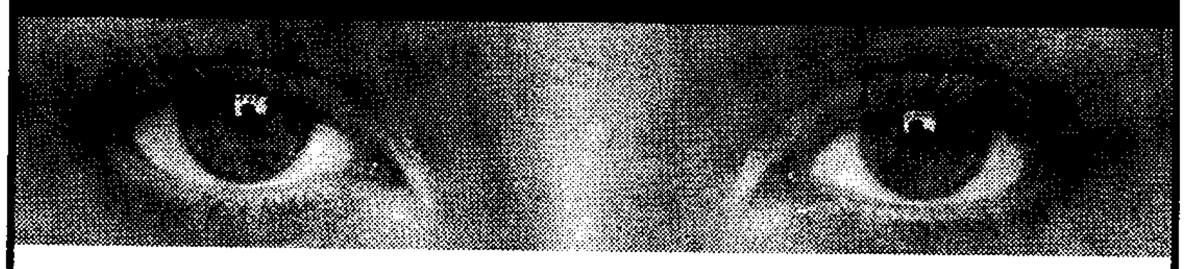

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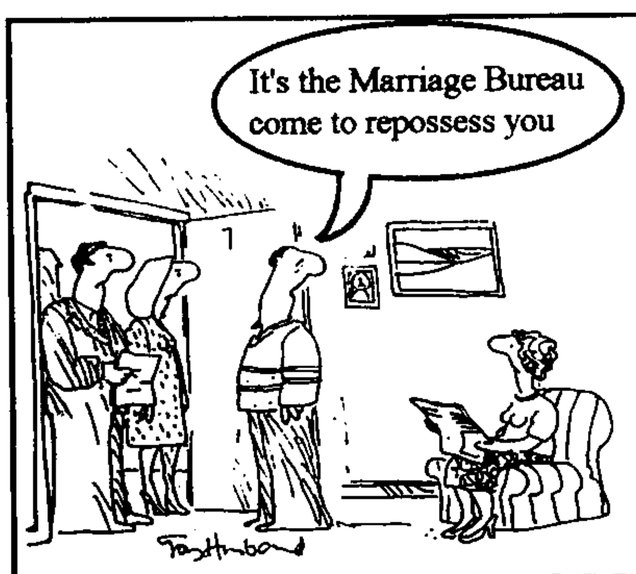

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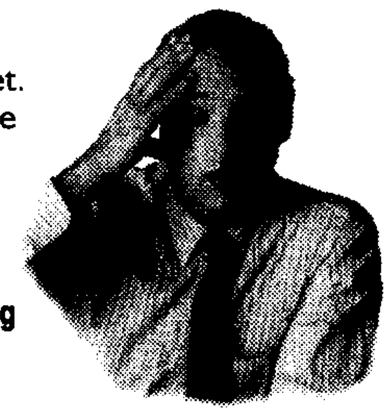

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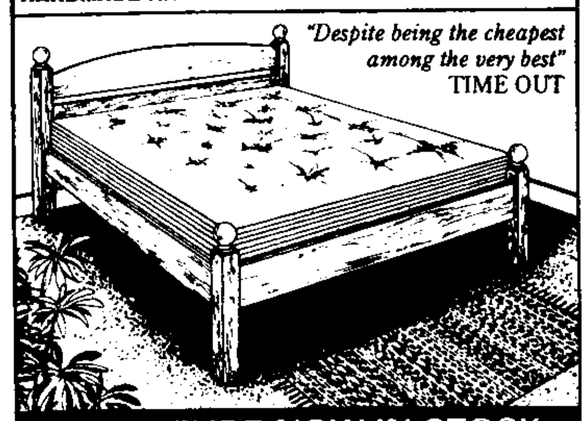

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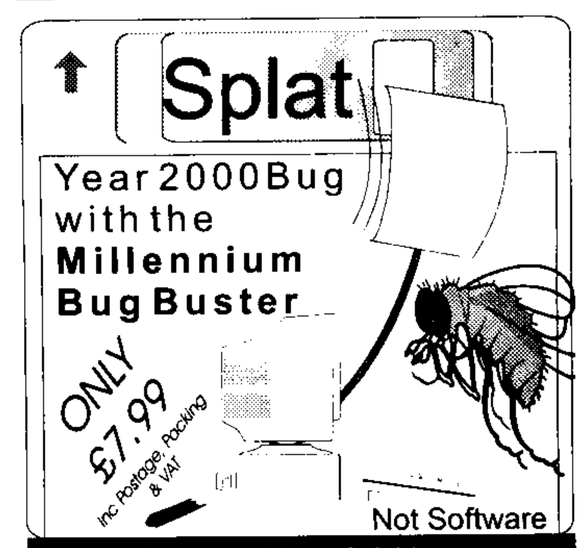

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QUOTE:

It is delightful to hear confirmation that King Arthur existed. One of the legends associated with him is that he will return when the country really needs him. The key question must be, does he bat or bowl?
DAVE ALLEN, *letter to The Guardian*

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CAPITAINE – thinking of Boyzone. Please come back. SOUS-FIFRE.

SECURE RESOURCES?

ALASTAIR (DP) – ditto darling. MERLOT. MARION.

SPEECHWRITING by Mitch Murray – see page 30.

INTERESTING CONFIDENTIAL FILE for disposal. Legal aid fraud on grand scale. Junior council drafting his own brief and that of his QC. Both paid cash. The pair advising not guilty plea when there was no chance. – Result. Six month trial. 8 year sentence. A bill for the taxpayer for plus of million. All covered up by Bar council and Law Society – Box 0157.

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LONDON. Pinstripe STILL yearns for well-loved jeans. Issue 956 EYE LOVE (14th ad) refers.

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for mutual pleasure
and sperm donation.
Box 1657.

MUSICIAN, 29, TALL, slim, laid-back, seeks sensual female soulmate. Box 2357.

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No 957
Friday
21 Aug '98

PRIVATE EYE

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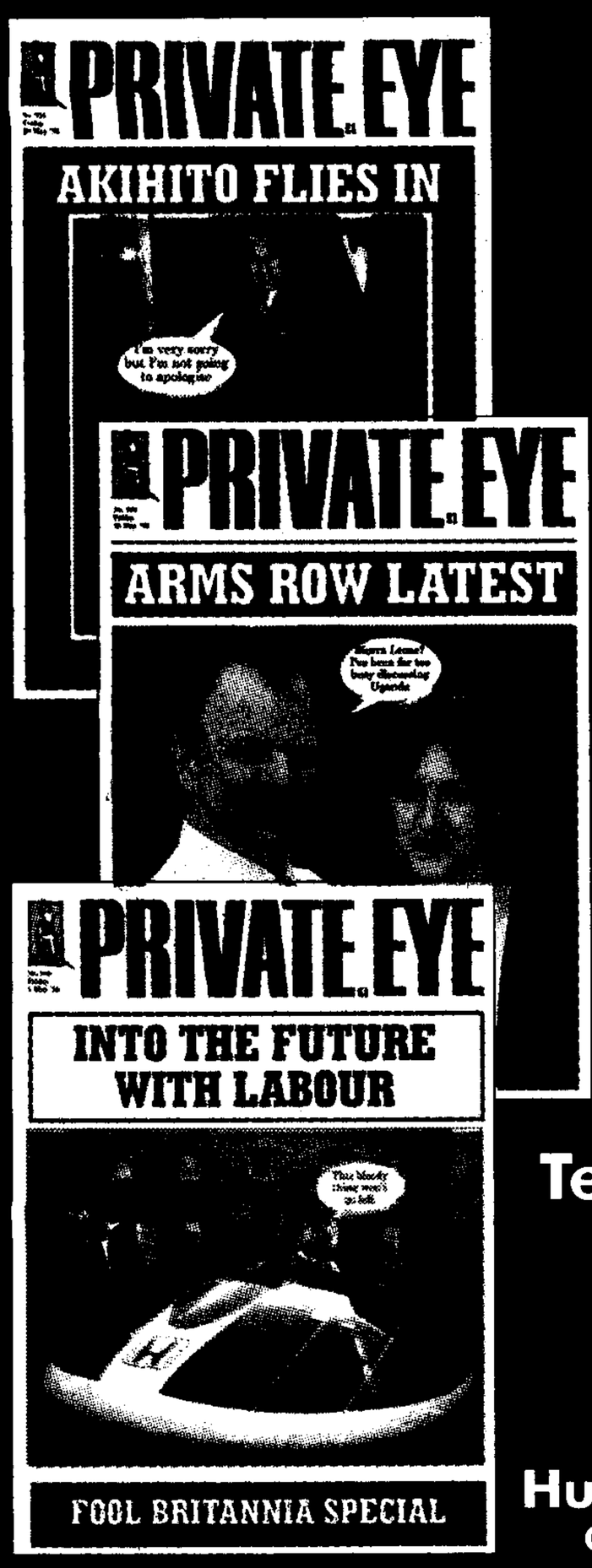

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Published by Pressdram Ltd, 6 Carlisle St, London W1 5RG. 0171 437 4017. Printed by East End Offset Ltd, Empson St, London E3 3LT. Distributed by P. E. Distribution Ltd, Mortimer Hse, 230/236 Lavender Hill, SW11 1LE 0171 223 9971